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ABSTRACT

These three journal issues include the following articles: "Competence in Facilitation" (Graham O'Connel); "Is My Map to Scale?" (Mark Wilson); "A Trainer's Dozen" (Barbara Thornton and Mary Lou McCloskey); "Carrot Ice Cream: Reactions to the New or Different" (Tessa Woodward); "Feeding (back to) the Five Thousand" (Julietta Schoenmann); "Classroom Interrogations" (Fiona Farr); "Emotional Literacy" (Harriet Goodman); "Building Structures of Support for Teachers" (Miriam Black); "PIGATE, Affecting EFL Teacher Change from the Grassroots in Japan" (Nobuyuki Takaki); "An Alternative Way for Teachers to Develop" (Naoko Aoki); "Making Mirrors in Primary Course Design" (Pam Aboshiha); "Towards a Classification Making Sense of the Internet in Language Teaching and Teacher Development" (Huw Jarvis); "A Cultural 'Aha' Moment in Teacher Education" (Natalie Hess and Jean Zukowski-Faust); "A Training Model for In-Service Teachers of English in China" (Ding Suping); "Learning to Teach: Who Controls the Interaction in the Teacher Education Classroom?" (Leslie Bobb Wolff); "A Lesson in Lesson Planning" (Martha Lengelin and Emily Thrush); and "Using Coursebooks to Train Teachers" (Jeremy Harmer). The journal issues also include interviews with people in the field, relevant Internet Web sites, an annotated list of publications received, and a review of the book "Advising and Supporting Teachers" (M. Randall and B. Thornton). (SM)

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The Teacher Trainer

A Pilgrims Publication

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The Teacher Trainer

A PRACTICAL JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO TRAIN, MENTOR AND EDUCATE TESOL TEACHERS

Inside!

- Getting better at facilitating groups 3
- Tasks to sort out our values 8
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- How do we all react to the new and different? 13
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Includes regular series: People who Train People, Just for interest, Meet a Colleague, Current Research, Trainer Background, Internet Web Sites, Publications Received.

Vol. 16 No.1

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ABOUT "THE TEACHER TRAINER"

The Teacher Trainer is a practical journal for those involved in modern language, especially TESOL, teacher training. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in the staff room, or a Director of studies with an office of your own, whether you are a mentor or a course tutor on an exam course, an inspector going out to schools or a teacher educator at a university, this journal is for you. Our aim is to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to put fellow professionals in touch with each other and to give all those involved in training, mentoring and educating teachers a feeling of how trainers in other fields operate, as well as building up a pool of experience within our own field.

The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. articles, letters, comments, quotations, interviews, cartoons, spoofs. If the idea is good and useful to trainers, we'll print it no matter what voice you choose to express it in.

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Editorial

Welcome to a new colour and a new volume!

I have lots of good news to share with you this time. We now have an administrator for the journal. Her name is Marian Nicholson and you can see her photo on this page. Marian helps me not only with the subscriptions but also with marketing the journal. This means that for the first time ever we can plan and carry out initiatives to reach more subscribers, advertisers and contributors to The Teacher Trainer. Already we have been able to increase our pages to 36 this issue, the biggest we have ever been!

You will note some other changes too. We have changed the masthead to include both up to date terms and also those who mentor as well as train and educate teachers. If you go to our web site, you will see the archive of back articles is building too. Do visit our beautiful blue web site, sign the guest book and tell us what you think about the web site and the journal. It's at www.tttjournal.co.uk.

As well as adding to some of our established series such as the popular People Who Train People (P3), Just for Interest (P13), Meet a Colleague (P15) Current Research (P19) Trainer Background (P23) and Publications Received (P26) columns, I have started up a new column this issue for those wanting to know about web sites for teacher trainers, educators and mentors and for the teachers we work with. (P25).

So we start 2002 and our sixteenth volume on the upbeat with wonderful new personnel, and lots of plans and possibilities. We would like to expand the journal adding more photos, more pages, more bio data, new columns. We'd like to build our web site too. We are all part- time but if you like the journal, you can help us by getting us one new subscriber each this year. Could you try? That would be a great help!
Thanks!

All good wishes

Tessa Woodward

The Editor

Marian Nicholson
The Administrator

Don't forget our new website: **www.tttjournal.co.uk**

Would you like to send something in to "The Teacher Trainer"?

"The Teacher Trainer" is designed to be a forum for trainers, mentors, teacher educators and trainees all over the world. If you'd like to send in a letter, a comment, a cartoon, a taped conversation or an article sharing information, ideas or opinions we'll be very happy to receive it. If you would like to send us an article, please try to write it in an accessible non-academic style. Lengths should normally be 800 – 4,000 words. Send your first draft in on paper typed in double spacing with broad margins. Your article will be acknowledged by pro-forma letter. Once you have had comments back later and have finalised your draft in negotiation with the editor, we will ask you to send us three hard (paper) copies and if at all possible a floppy disk (micro 3½" or 9cm). **Your article needs to be saved on the disk as a Microsoft Word (98 or lower) or as an ASCII file**. Keep your headings and sub-headings in **upper and lower case throughout**. Finally, please give an accurate word count and a **very** short biography. We try to publish your article within about five issues, but if it is an awkward length it may be longer. It will be assumed that your article has not been published before nor is being considered by another publication. We look forward to reading your article!

Teacher trainers often say that "facilitation" of groups is a major part of their role. I set out then to find a trainer of facilitation skills and found one in Graham O'Connell who works as an International Training & Development Consultant and Director of Advanced Facilitation Skills at the Civil Service College, UK. Contact him on 01344 634336

The Civil Service College is a Directorate of the Government's Centre for Management and Policy Studies (CMPS). The College offers around 500 different courses, and extensive consultancy services, for all parts of the public sector, the private sector and international governments. CMPS, itself part of Cabinet Office, plays a leading role in supporting the Modernising Government agenda. Here are Graham's thoughts on:

COMPETENCE AND EXCELLENCE IN FACILITATION

by Graham O'Connell

Facilitation

Broadly speaking, a facilitator is someone whose role it is to help a group to work well together in achieving a goal. Facilitation has always struck me as a rather less directive art than chairing a meeting, giving a talk or driving through change. I see it as pulling learning, ideas, decisions, or solutions to problems, out of people (even if they don't know these are within them). It should not be pulling teeth, but just about anything else is fair game.

At first glance I must confess that 'pushing skills' are not an obvious requirement for a facilitator. But sometimes it is useful to be give direction, to be definite (so people know what to expect and what to do) and to have certitude (to inspire confidence). As a catalyst for change, facilitators also need that all-too-rare a quality: flexibility. To push and to pull. To be detached and yet also engaged. To work with people and to deliver results.

The components of the facilitator role might include:

- working to help the group before and after they meet so that preparations and future plans are congruent with group goals and needs
- helping the group to create a safe, constructive atmosphere where everyone can make a valued contribution, and conflict, should it occur, can be handled maturely
- offering method and structure to oil the wheels of group process and to aid them in their work
- being an impartial catalyst; enabling new thoughts, new actions, new interactions

Learning to be a facilitator doesn't take long. I often try and train people at the Civil Service College in just a few days. The College, one of Europe's largest providers of short courses, offers a choice of facilitation programmes for new and experienced facilitators. Typically these programmes are two or three days in duration. Learning to be a good facilitator, however, can take a life-time. Or at least it is taking me a life-time. But no one said the road from competence to excellence was a short one.

A little about competence and excellence

If competence is about the small things you do (rather than the clever things you know) then I guess I believe in competence. After all there would be no woods without trees. Unfortunately competencies are often set out like a pine forest - neat and orderly but also barren and impenetrable. Or worse still they pile all the bark in one corner and all the leaves in another, destroying the synergy that is the very essence of an organism or an organisation.

And what of excellence? Perhaps this is about the extraordinary things we do (rather than exceptionally ordinary things we seem to fill our days with).

This has been my challenge. To set out the ingredients that make up facilitation right the way along the chain of development: beginner - novice - competent - excellent - expert. And the greatest part of that challenge has been the pursuit of the magic that is to be found towards the end of that chain.

My journey

Of the many influences on me I would highlight, like the points of a compass, just four.

First, in the Chinese philosophy of Taoism, I discovered the importance of 'being' rather than doing. Letting the personal quality that is yourself shine through (to illuminate not to dazzle). And the strength that comes from wisdom rather than mere knowledge. John Heider's book, The Tao of Leadership is, in my view, essential reading for all facilitators. I will restrict myself to just one quote: "Like it or not, we are all team players. Power comes through co-operation, independence through service, and a greater self through selflessness." The principles and ethics that underpin your own approach may be different. But do have some.

continued

For intellectual grasp of facilitation theory and practice, I always look to John Heron. In fairness, his grasp is something more than intellectual; it is holistic. But it is his descriptive categorisation of interventions that gives his work so much substance. It certainly opened my eyes to the range of options available and helped me to appreciate why I might take a particular approach. I started this piece by talking about pulling and pushing in facilitation - a seemingly straightforward notion of opposites. Heron makes a valuable link between the style of the facilitator and group development: "Being charismatic and hierarchical in the early stages of training to enable people to be more autonomous and co-operative, is a basic principle of facilitation" (in training). He puts great store in charisma - the non-egocentric sort - and this, along with other power issues, is a matter of great concern and ambivalence for many facilitators.

To understand groups and group processes is a distinct advantage for facilitators. It is perhaps the single biggest influence on what a facilitator might say and do, when and how. There is often an assumption that facilitators, like spouses, are gifted with telepathy. In fact it is usually a combination of general understanding about what happens in groups and an acuity for detecting what is happening right now in a particular group. Although I love working with groups, and have learnt a lot about people from these experiences, I must confess that sometimes telepathy would come in handy. Fortunately I found the next best thing. A clear set of ideas on what to look out for. In this respect I owe much to the deceptively simple 'Once upon a Group' - Michael Kindred, the author and publisher, has a wonderful lightness of touch. I have done much serious learning about groups but his approach is both practical and humorous.

But it is from those who I have had the privilege of working with that I have learnt the most - sometimes small things and sometimes excellent demonstrations of skill, tips or options.

As well as the four points of the compass - North, South, East and West - there is a fifth point. If you have ever been lost, you will know that is often the hardest one to determine. It is: where am I right now? In facilitation terms this is all about self awareness. I have had to learn to wrestle with my ego and a potentially unhealthy desire to be liked and admired. Getting to understand me has been variously fascinating, terrifying and, undoubtedly, good for me. I am not there yet (are we ever?), but I am at least much clearer about the values and drivers which underpin my personal style.

The OFM model (O'Connell's Facilitation Matrix)

The following model of facilitation is work-in-progress. I invite you to view it as a vehicle - a mountain bike perhaps - get on board and go where you will. But remember, this bike is not for your pleasure or excitement. It is to help get you to those places that are hard to get to, or are off the map. Don't pedal too hard or your head will go down and you will be in for a fall. Keep your head up and enjoy the ride. It can be excellent.

PURPOSE / SKILLS	Problem Solving	Strategic Planning	Learning	Decision Making	Team/relationship bldg	Experimenting with or implementing change
Listening						
Eliciting						
Challenging						
Demonstrating						
Disclosing						
Directing						
Empowering						

O'Connell's Facilitation Matrix Model (1998)

The OFM Model: 1.Purpose Dimension

This dimension looks at the main reasons why a group might need to meet and what the facilitator should be helping them to achieve. The purpose or objectives of a group may go beyond this model but most facilitated group work has one or more of the following goals -

1. Problem solving
2. Strategic planning
3. Learning
4. Decision -making
5. Team or interpersonal relationship building
6. Experimenting with or implementing change

The goal, or mix of goals, may lead you towards certain types of activities and should give more focus to your facilitation. For example, a group that has to solve a problem may need to start by understanding the problem, then considering a wide range of options, evaluating those options, considering the implications of applying the 2 or

3 best solutions, then agreeing on who needs to do what and by when. The facilitator will need to help the group to analyse, think creatively, to vision ahead, to negotiate and so on.

I find the above model helpful in distinguishing between my overall goal and what I am trying to achieve at any given moment. For example, I was trying to help a group of senior managers with their strategic planning. At one stage they were in conflict with each other and that needed to be resolved before the planning could sensibly be completed. Later on they were struggling to make a decision (to close down part of their operation). It was a tough decision that nobody wanted to make. I had to challenge them with some strength in order to help them break out of their inertia. Not the sort of strength that pushes towards a particular decision, but the sort that rattles and shakes in order to enable them to move forward. Purposes are like wheels within wheels. In order to remain effective it is vital to be really clear about your intentions at every stage.

I hope the model in the figure above will help you to keep in mind what you are aiming to achieve at any given moment and by the end of the event.

The OFM Model: 2. The 7 Skills Dimension

The model identifies the main skills used when facilitating groups. The list is not exhaustive. The 7 Skills are -

1. **Listening**
   - Active listening: attentive, good eye contact, using minimal encouragers ("uh huh", "I see"), paraphrasing, counselling
   - Passive listening: non-interruptive, little eye contact (but not rudely), still, 'skilled inactivity', silent observation

2. **Eliciting**
   - Inviting: encouraging contributions, permission giving, seeking volunteers, getting others to give of themselves, highlighting opportunities
   - Questioning: probing for breadth or depth, unfolding motives and reasons, a catalyst to thinking, seeking information, views and ideas

3. **Challenging**
   - Confronting: feeding back about unhelpful behaviour, describing impact of their behaviour, negotiating options, confronting the group (eg hidden agendas)
   - Setting challenges: providing challenging activities, testing, goal setting, simulating real life obstacles, playing devil's advocate

4. **Demonstrating**
   - Explicit demonstration: showing how to do a task or skill, illustrating by behaviour rather than words alone, distinguishing good and poor performance - Implicit demonstration: being congruent in own

continued ⟶

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behaviour and words with what you expect of others, role-modelling, referring to others' behaviour

5. **Disclosing**
   - Disclosing experiences and ideas; providing options, revealing your own learning, giving own views
   - Disclosing feelings and intuitions; rapport building, empathising, speculating, tone setting (eg "It is OK to talk about feelings"), sensing atmospheres and bringing things in to the open

6. **Directing**
   - Directing content: giving information and advice, confirming absolutes (ie definitive rights or wrongs), influencing and negotiating, concluding
   - Directing process: agreeing the programme or agenda, briefing for activities, managing time, managing group process, structuring, building common ground

7. **Empowering**
   - Giving praise and feedback; being supportive especially when thinking new thoughts or experimenting with new behaviours, building confidence, delegating
   - Exuding (eg enthusiasm); being confident and trustworthy, enabling others by being yourself, defusing tension or other blocks wit humour, being calm, letting go

The 7 Skills in the model provide a set of ingredients that can be mixed and blended according to the requirements of the recipe, the tastes of the group and the style of the cook. There are three main keys to success: i) be clear about your purpose; ii) be skilled in your application (but be open to make - and cope with - mistakes); and, iii) be ethical in your principles.

The OFM Model: 3. The Matrix:

The matrix itself is a visual representation of the relationship between the skills a facilitator may use and the purpose, or intent, behind their use. It is built on a simple premise: if you can be clear about your purpose and skilful in its implementation, then you are more likely to achieve a successful outcome.

At first glance it looks like an observer's checklist, inviting a tick or a cross in the appropriate boxes. However, I prefer to see it as a self-diagnostic tool. You could describe or draw a picture of what you do when you are at your best in each section, thus building up a map of options based on your own best practices. Or use it as an aid to identify your development needs. The matrix is a framework of blank canvasses.

One facilitator who works as a trainer for a major UK Bank was telling me about how she had challenged one of her delegates about his resistance to learning. Things had not worked out well as he had similarly resisted her challenge. When we used the model to unpick what had happened, we realised that she had done the wrong thing really well. It turns out that his discomfort was about change not learning, and this led to him being dogmatic, aggressive and insensitive to others. When we looked again at the options, she realised that she might have tackled the symptoms - challenging him about the impact of his behaviour on team relationships. Or she might have addressed the underlying cause (resistance to change; and perhaps under that, fear) - she might have disclosed how she too went through a phase of resistance, or perhaps she might have elicited information about what he needed at that moment.

It is hard to guess after the event what might have worked best. But at least she now has some options for next time and a framework for thinking about things differently. Her actual intervention was not inherently bad - it might have worked well in other circumstances. An intervention is like a key, it is only effective if it fits.

Looking at the matrix as a whole, there is no one ideal profile. You can use any combination of the skills when working on any combination of purposes. The key is to use each skill in a way that is consistent with the purpose and the nature of the group. It is this last factor - the nature of the group - that is the greatest variable. Much has been written about group development and the roles people play. But groups are like people; each has its own personality.

Group Development & Facilitation

Over time groups evolve. If they are well facilitated they can grow from a set of nervous and uncertain individuals to a highly effective team. A number of theorists (such as Tuckman, Bion, and Schein) have mapped out these stages in their own words. Some practitioners (such as Rosaria Taraschi) have also added in the focus and behaviours of effective facilitators at the various stages.

A second model

The model below goes in two further directions. Firstly, it draws a parallel with individuals and nature - suggesting perhaps there are parallels between the two domains. Secondly, it goes beyond the high performance stage of a group's development, through to dissolution. It is here that the facilitator needs to focus on sustainable development going well beyond the confines and life of the group. In particular the facilitator may wish to help the group to develop the 7 skills shown in Fig 1. above. It is these same skills that enable individuals and effective teams to sustain their own success.

STAGE	HELPER	STAGE	HELPER	STAGE	HELPER
GROUPS	**Facilitator**	**INDIVIDUAL**	**Parent**	**NATURE**	**Gardener**
Formation	Clarify, reassurance; bring together, set tone	**Baby**	Nurture; care for	**Seedling**	Warmth, good conditions
Dependancy	Give direction, coach, encourage	**Child**	Guide and support	**Sapling**	Feed and water
Power-play	Negotiate, involve; manage conflict	**Teenager**	Set boundaries; empower	**Rampant**	Shape, stake and prune
Bonding	Offer fun, Challenge, disclosure	**Couple**	Let go, celebrate	**Pollination**	Plant close together
Team working	Delegate, support be catalytic	**Adult**	Be there, relate to as equal	**Fruitful**	Harvest
Re-focusing	Counsel; help with plans	**Old age**	Less active but wise, be supported	**Over ripe**	Find new use; make fine wine
Dispersal	Offer consultancy; encourage spreading of learning	**Death**	Pass on, leave memories and experience with next generation	**Compost**	Enrich the soil

O'Connell's Facilitation Gorup Development Model

As the group evolves, the facilitator shifts from being benignly directive and hierarchical at the start. Then to being more egalitarian and working as a co-ordinator in the middle life of the group. And finally acting more as a consultant, a resource available to the group, as and when needed.

The OFM model is represented as a two dimensional matrix. In 3-D it would include the qualitative nature of how the facilitator manages the human dimension - themselves, the individuals in the group and the group processes, including it's evolution. Excellence is nearly always a three dimensional quality.

Competence & Excellence in Facilitation

Let us look again at competence and excellence. A competent facilitator will use a range of skills to help a group to achieve their goal. So what? That is what she or he gets paid for. It is the minimum. An excellent facilitator, however, will make a real difference to the individual, the group, the organisation or even, more widely, to the society in which we live. An aspiration that requires both inspiration and perspiration. Ah, but what a worthwhile aspiration!

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Is My Map To Scale?

by Mark Wilson, Spain.

The task sequences presented here are intended for in-service training sessions or teacher development or discussion groups, and at a push might be adaptable to late stages of pre-service teacher training courses such as the UCLES CELTA. They aim to provide ways of questioning the relative value of various aspects of our classroom practice - in other words, to enhance a sense of perspective and proportion. Which things are really important and which less so? Have we been overvaluing or undervaluing anything? I hope in any case that you feel an insatiable craving to try them out with a few colleagues!

Task Sequence 1: Teachers A & B

This sequence is designed to encourage questioning of four terms that sometimes receive too uncritical a thumbs-up:

- learner-centred (sometimes simplistically taken to mean "not involving the teacher" - even if that leaves students floundering)
- communicative (simplistically = "get 'em talking" - however hesitant or low-octane the communication)
- personalisation (simplistically = "get 'em talking *about themselves*" - even if imposed or "fictitious" material might actually be more interesting or rewarding)
- authentic (simplistically = "make it real" - regardless of unhelpful distractions)

In designing these tasks I've tried to avoid the trap of "setting it up to knock it down".
I would hope that equal respect be extended to both of the teachers A and B below.

Task 1
You will read a description of how two teachers go about teaching lessons which have virtually the same aims, but which are approached in different ways. Discuss the relative merits of the way teachers A and B choose to begin their lessons.

Teacher A
Vocabulary review game
T divides class into two teams. T gets a S from one team to come to front of class and sit with back to board. T writes on board a word which has cropped up recently in class. Team members have to elicit the word from the S at front through definition, explanation or "oral gapfill". When the S gets it, team get a point and play switches to other team, and so on alternately.

Teacher B
Vocabulary review
T elicits items of recently-encountered vocabulary through a variety of techniques e.g. "suspended sentences" (e.g. *So after he was arrested he was taken to the .....* to elicit *police station*), "oral gapfill"(e.g. *and he was charged* ..(T makes noise to indicate gap)... *dangerous driving* to elicit *with*), first-letter priming, explanation, definition.

All this is done at a brisk pace with frequent recapping. T ensures that all Ss participate by alternating between group response and random individual nomination.

Should teacher B's wrist be slapped for being teacher-centred, uncommunicative, not "fun"? Perhaps you can see where I'm heading.
Consider the following task before reading how Teachers A & B continue their lessons.

Task 2.

For each of the two lessons described - **assuming a competent, alert, knowledgeable, sensitive teacher in both cases** - indicate which of the following attributes apply, and then evaluate to what extent their presence or absence affects the quality of the lesson.

	Tchr A	Tchr B	Value? (comment)
Learner-Centered?			
Communicative?			
Authentic?			
Personalised?			

Teacher A's Gerunds & Infinitives Lesson

1. T gives out cards for an activity requiring the Ss to match up half-sentences to form complete sentences, each containing a verb which is sometimes used with the gerund and sometimes with the infinitive, e.g. stop, remember, forget, try, regret etc. Examples include:

Please remember to include / descriptions with each image.
I don't remember seeing her / on the Carol Burnett show.
I shall not easily forget meeting / several scouts who stated firmly that hiking was the best part of the adventure.

(The sentences are authentic examples collated by the teacher)
The Ss are asked to work in pairs, then the answers are checked in whole-group feedback.

2. T draws attention to, and concept-checks, the different meanings of the verbs depending on whether used with infinitive or gerund.

3. Ss are given another handout beginning:

Tell your partner about...
...someone you'll never forget meeting
...something you remember doing when you were five or six
...something you forgot to do which caused a problem.
(etc)

Ss talk in pairs.

Teacher B's Gerunds & Infinitives Lesson

1. T half-tells, half-elicits a story concocted so as to contextualise verbs which take either gerund or infinitive e.g. stop, remember, forget, try, regret etc. It is a story about a disastrous car journey - somewhat unnatural and far-fetched, but nevertheless (or, indeed, consequently) easily memorable at least in outline. The story's ending typifies the ways it contextualises the target language:
Eventually he told us he was closing in five minutes, so he wouldn't be able to fix the window till the following morning. This ***meant staying*** *the night in a hotel. And we had* ***meant to arrive*** *in Cadiz by 7 o'clock in the evening!*

2. T recaps briefly every few minutes, putting key words or drawings on board as story is built up. These are used as prompts to elicit sentences about the story so far. Ss are encouraged to add detail if they like.

3. At end of story, T puts Ss in pairs to try and reconstruct story orally from key words on board. T monitors.

4. Whole-group feedback. T elicits back whole story, asking concept questions at points involving target verbs in order to clarify how infinitive or gerund give the verbs different meanings. T paraphrases these meanings in a colomn at one side of the board. Ss take notes.

5. T cleans the board, then gives out gapped text telling story. Gaps force Ss to decide between initiatives and gerunds.

Task 3. Discuss the following, weighing up and comparing "to what extent" for the lessons given by teachers A & B, and considering what further steps might enrich the learning process:

1. *Are rhe students' memories challenged?*
2. *Are students engaged in the buildup?*
3. *Might "teacher flair" be a factor here? Can the ability to "perform" influence the decision about the best approach to take?*
4. *Is the lesson easy to recap in future?*
5. *Is students' effort of an engaging nature?*
6. *Is student production likely to be faltering or confident?*
7. *Have students been empowered for future production?*
8. *Do students leave with a sense of satisfaction at having learnt something?*
9. *Does the chosen method suit both motivated and "reluctant" learners?*
10. *Do students leave with a useful record of something?*

Task Sequence 2: Limits Of Validity

Good teaching is not just a matter of assuming there are certain "good things to do in the classroom" and then applying them uncritically. It is a question of constant watchfulness and decision-making, prioritising options for optimal effect, choosing the most appropriate next step at each point. To a large extent this can happen at the planning stage, but to a certain extent it has to happen on the spur of the moment in the classroom itself. Over time, the better I develop my instincts for such decision-making, the less meticulous I need to be in planning. These instincts can perhaps best be developed by questioning the limits of validity of any given procedure.

Task
Here is a list of things which are often regarded as "good practice". For each of them, think of as many ways as possible of completing the following sentence, then discuss with colleagues:

..... is/are valid for ..... but not if .....

- brainstorming
- eliciting
- drawing timelines
- getting students to compare their answers
- setting tasks and activities
- getting students to predict
- games
- getting students to read aloud
- explaining grammar
- getting students to explain language points to each other
- using dictionaries in class
- going over homework in class

Obviously the list can be extended, adapted and constantly updated. It might take several sessions to cover all of it in satisfying depth. Through such discussion, and perhaps by comparing with results obtained from *previous* discussion groups, teachers come not only to question our own practice but to feel part of an emerging consensus as to what is and isn't valid *in our particular teaching context*. And where controversy arises, that too is part of the process: simply add a rider to the framework-sentence so that it reads:
"..... is/are valid for ..... but not if .....; but ..... or .....?"

Teachers then explore the controversy in their subsequent teaching. An example might go something like this:
"Using dictionaries in class can be valid for jigsaw activites where Ss "do research" and then teach each other, but not if students are likely to perceive this as abdication of the teacher's role; but does this then suggest that teachers should adopt appropriate learner training strategies to work on these perceptions, or would this be an unwarranted cultural imposition in our specific context?"

continued

In practice, it is of course useful for the session leader to have sketched out their own "suggested answers" in advance, and then to seek an appropriate blend of elicitation and guidance during feedback. If you would like a set of already road-tested "suggested answers", contact me on mark@lacunza.es.
The results of a discussion on the first item - brainstorming - might look like this:

brainstorming
is valid for - getting Ss thinking about a given topic as a lead-in to a task (reading, listening or writing)
- diagnosing how much vocab they already know in a given area
-confidence-building- reinforcing/extending what Ss come up with by adding a collocational element

but not if - it goes on too long
- the teacher doesn't clearly distinguish between diagnosis and **input** (i.e. assumes that what they come up with is all they need)
it is not challenging enough
the teacher automatically puts everything up on board regardless of how new or useful
the teacher doesn't fix new items on the board or get Ss to copy in notebooks
- the teacher doesn't check that what is written in notebooks is in fact correct
- the teacher doesn't check that **all** Ss understand (and hear!) the items that come up

Task Sequence 3: Four Truths Of Teaching

Task 1: For each of the four statements below, discuss:
To what extent is it true?
What should be done about it?

1. What you put in doesn't necessarily go in.
2. What goes in doesn't necessarily stay in.
3. What stays in doesn't necessarily come out.
4. What comes out wasn't necessarily put in.

Key concepts:
input intake practice revision exposure acquisition
(This task is best done by revealing the four truths one by one on an OHT, discussing each at some length before moving to the next)

Task 2: Extend each of the four statements by adding "because..." or "unless..."

Endpiece
If a world map is to scale, then Greenland is nowhere near as big as Australia. Yet we are all so accustomed to the Mercator projection that we could be forgiven for assuming otherwise. I hope these tasks provide teachers with a means of asking: "Do I have any Greenlands of my own?"

A version of this article first appeared in the *IH Journal*.

A Trainers' Dozen: 12 Things to Do with a Pack of Cards

by Barbara Thornton, Turkey and Mary Lou McCloskey, USA (President of TESOL)

As trainers who travel, over the years we have accumulated a bag of training props and accessories we carry with us. Some come from commercial sources but we also keep in the bag a collection of miscellaneous items with multiple uses including a pack of playing cards. We would like to share with you some of the uses to which we have put these and invite you to add any other ideas.

Assigning Groups

Although adults enjoy meeting new colleagues at workshops, they sometimes like to sit in the same place all the time and can be resistant to changing seats. Playing cards can provide a game-like way for you to re-assemble your participants into new groups of the right size for your activity, and in the process assign everyone a suit and number for the activities themselves

- For groups of 4, select 4 of each number card from the pack adding up to the total number in the group. For example, for a group of 24, use 4 Kings, 4 Queens, 4 Jacks, 4 Aces, 4 tens and 4 nines.
- Distribute cards at random and get participants to mingle and find all the others with the same value. Then reseat by having all the same numbers sit together, e.g., 10s sitting together, jacks sitting together etc. Now each group has a name (the number or picture on the card) and each person a role (heart, club, spade or diamond).
- You can prepare for additional regroupings by placing symbols or coloured dots on the cards. After activities are completed with the initial groups, ask participants to find others with the same symbol or colour and join them for the next series.

Assigning Leadership Roles.

- Cards can provide a useful way of assigning leadership roles in the group
- Explain the roles that members of the group will play during the group activity (see the chart).
- Introduce the activity.
- Remind participants to play their roles during the activity.
- Get them to assess how well they performed their role after the activity.

Leadership Roles

❤ ***Heart – Encourager***
Praises others and makes sure that the tone is constructive and encouraging.
"That's a good idea, Mario. Let's write it down."

♣ ***Club – Taskmaster***
Keeps everyone focused on the task. Checks to see that goals are being met.
"Are we working on our task?" "What is the question we need to answer?"

♦ ***Diamond – Writer***
Has sharp ideas and a sharp pencil. Writes down ideas of the group.
"Does everyone agree? Should I add this to our list?"

♠ ***Spade – Questioner and Spokesperson***
Digs around to make sure the good ideas get out and that all have chances to express themselves.
Language Sample:
"What's the next question? I'll read it out loud."
"What do you think, Isabel?"

Calling on Individuals

With a large group, it can be difficult to ensure that all participate. This activity, which requires two packs of cards (for groups of up to 52), will help you get to everyone.

- Select from each pack the number of cards that matches your number of participants. Give each participant a card. Keep a duplicate set for yourself.
- When you need a participant to answer a question or participate in an activity, pick a card at random from your set.
- Once the participant has answered, put that card to one side. Continue until everyone in the group has responded.

Calling on Groups

If your participants are working in small groups, you can use your cards to select a group to provide a response, share their product, etc.

- Pass out one different value card to each group.
- Put a duplicate set in a hat.
- You can get the groups to name themselves, including the card value, e.g., "The Crazy Eights" "The Kings of Corn," "The Jolly Jokers," etc.
- Draw from the hat when you request a group response, want a group to share their product etc.

Build that House of Cards

This is a variation of the usual Lego building game, which we have found a useful activity for practising communication and team-building skills. You will need two packs of playing cards and two rooms (or areas out of view of one another) for this activity.

- Divide participants into two groups.
- In Room A, the group assigned builds a playing card house with one deck of cards. This can be as simple or as complex as time and your participants allow.
- In Room B place a second deck of playing cards
- The participants in room A are directors of a company who will make a great deal of money if they build a reconstruction of their house within a specified period of time.
- The participants in Room B are the workers in the factory who must build the house. The workers are not allowed to leave the factory. Only one director at a time can leave the room.
- Start your timer. Twenty minutes is a reasonable amount of time to allow for this activity.
- At the end of the activity, debrief by looking at aspects of team work, communication, and leadership

Variations

- *Have a group of messengers who can move around the corridors to deliver the messages but must not enter either room.*
- *Set up an internal phone or walkie-talkies between rooms and have communication take place in this way.*
- *Have all communication take place in writing*

A Keen Eye [1]

As a great deal of our work has been with supervisors who need practice in observation skills, we have used the following activity. Put participants into pairs. Give one person in each pair a dozen or so assorted cards. Give out the following role cards:

> **Card player**
>
> Arrange the cards you have been given. You must be prepared to justify why you have arranged them in this way.

> **Observer**
>
> Look very carefully at what your partner is doing. Take very careful notes of their body language and every single thing they do. Note down how they are arranging their cards. What are the rules they have been given? Are they sure about the rules? How do you know? How do they feel about the activity?

Allow 5 – 10 minutes for the activity.

Debrief after the activity bringing out the following points:

Card player
How did you feel when the observer was writing things down and you were unsure what was being written? (leading into a discussion of the importance of observation criteria and the role of the supervisor in taking notes during a lesson)
Did you feel that there might be one correct way of organising the cards and you were unsure what it was?

Observer
Did you find it easy to work out the rules the card player had been given? Is your interpretation of the way the cards are organized the same as the card players? (leading into a discussion of how easy it is to misjudge the reasons behind actions
How do you think the card player felt? What effect do you feel your observation had on him or her? How do you know? (leading into a discussion of non-verbal language).

Yes / No Responses

- Get quick feedback on any yes-no question, even with a very large group
- Give each participant a playing card.
- Explain that the card side means "yes" and the back means "no".
- Ask a question. Give participants time to think.

continued →

Then say, "Cards up!" and they all hold up their cards with their answers at once.

- Use these for instant feedback any time you need it.

Variations

Use for

- *pre-assessment (who has ever heard of .....?)*
- *audience survey (Do you have more than ten years of experience?)*
- *choice (would you like to take a break now or after the next activity? Would you like me to spend more time on this?)*

True / False Quiz

- Use the cards to give you quick feedback on participant comprehension of your content. Have participants use the cards, as in the "Yes-No" activity, to answer questions on a true-false quiz.
- Give each participant a playing card.
- Explain that the card side means "true" and the back means "false".
- Read out each question on the quiz.
- Give participants a few minutes to think.
- Give them a signal to hold up their cards
- Quickly survey the cards and estimate the percentage of right answers.
- Use the information to make decisions about how quickly to proceed.

Rating the activity, the trainer, themselves

Trainers may sometimes wish to have instant feedback – to check comprehension, to choose the next activity, to find out how much participants liked an activity... Our deck of cards works great for this, as well.

- Give each group playing cards from 1 to 5.
- Read out a statement which can be ranked along a Likert scale, e.g.,

We fully understand everything you have said this morning

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly disagree				Strongly agree

- When you wish to have feedback on your question, ask the groups to discuss their answer, make a decision, and, at a signal, respond by holding up the card of its choice

Variations

You can get feedback on:

- *The applicability of an activity to your trainees' context*
- *How sleepy participants are feeling*
- *How well they are able to concentrate*
- *Their enjoyment of the session*
- *Which activity they'd like to do next, etc.*

Reward / feedback on correct answers

Cards can help you provide a little extra excitement if you use them to build up to a climactic reward. You will need one or more small prizes for this activity.

- Decide on behaviours you would like to reward.
- In a recent workshop, for example, we wanted to encourage teamwork and support. In another workshop, you might want to reward right answers during the review at the beginning of each session.
- Decide whether you will award individuals or groups.
- Reward examples of your selected positive behaviours by giving out cards. Be extremely liberal, and a bit random, in distributing cards.
- At the end of the workshop or training session, the person (or group) with the most cards with the highest values wins the prize.

Variations

- *You might want to award cards for:*
- *arriving on time from breaks*
- *volunteering answers*
- *supporting other members of the group*

NB: This activity was judged culturally inappropriate in one context we worked in as it smacked of gambling. When in doubt, ask a cultural informant or two.

"Help" Signal

Often as a trainer, it is difficult to strike a happy balance between leaving participants alone during an activity and over-monitoring / interfering.

Cards can help participants tell you when they need your assistance during independent small group work or individual activities, which you are monitoring.

When you assign an independent activity, give each participant or group a card

- Explain that face up means the group wants your assistance, face down means they don't need help right now.
- As you walk around the group during the activity, check the cards to see where your attention is needed.

Lighten Up

Use cards to help you provide some light moments.

- When you distribute cards for one of the other activities above, make sure to include some jokers in several groups.
- Warn the jokers that you may call on them at any time to use 1 minute to tell a story, sing a song, imitate a presenter, show off a skill, etc. Tell them that if they're unwilling, they need to find someone else who is willing and give the card to them.
- At opportune moments during the workshop, call on the Joker of Spades, for example, to share their light moment.

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[1] I first used this activity when working on a course in Poland with Melanie Ellis and Colin Campbell

JUST FOR INTEREST

Carrot ice cream: Reactions to the new or different

by Tessa Woodward, Editor

PB

Introduction

Years ago when I went to the USA for the very first time, I was given some carrot ice cream to try. I tasted the ice cream and my mind went all confused. One part of my brain seemed to be telling me that the stuff I was tasting was very cold and smooth and therefore must be ice cream. Another part of my brain seemed to be telling me that, as the stuff in my mouth was carrot flavoured, it MUST be warm and rough. But it wasn't...Help! I was stunned by this genuine newness. "So..." said my friend. "What do you think?" I couldn't answer. I couldn't think. I froze for a long time and then declared, "It's impossible!" That is one reaction to the new. Denial!

Back in our professional world, reactions to the new and different can be just as dramatic. Like all teachers and trainers, I am often in groups where someone is attempting to introduce something a little new or a little different to people who are, ostensibly, gathered together precisely in order to meet something which is a little new or a little different. Over the years, whether in ice cream parlours, language classes, workshops for teachers, staff meetings to discuss a new timetable or in informal teacher and trainer development groups, I've been noting my own and other people's reactions to newness.

It seems to me to be centrally important that I understand more about this. So, below, I'll introduce some of the types of reaction I have noticed in myself and others. I'll give a nickname to each type of reaction and this nickname will refer to possible reactions to carrot ice cream. Under each nickname however, the explanation will be in terms of more familiar professional situations.

Reaction types

Reaction one. Can we talk about curry instead?

Here, the person is not interested in the topic chosen for discussion. Perhaps they feel it's not relevant to their situation or perhaps they have had the agenda decided over their head. Or maybe there is something else about the situation that makes them feel like appropriating the agenda.

Reaction two. Carrot what? What is ice cream? Sorry I can't understand anything.

Newness sometimes seems to cause a general fogging of the brain in some people. It's almost as if all systems have shut down for a while. Usually, more explaining leads to more fog! Best for the fogged one to take a break for a while. On coming back to the same information later, it will probably be much clearer.

Reaction three. I love it! Give me the recipe. Can I take home your ingredients?

Some people fall in love with an idea instantly, certain that it will transfer to their own situation, wanting to use it immediately and not wanting to go to the bother of adapting or varying the idea or even of making their own materials. They'd rather photocopy, sound or video- tape the presenter's!

Reaction four. Yuk! I hate it. So I'm never going to make it.

Some folk take against a new idea instantly. They do not bother to entertain it or learn about it. If they are trainers, this means that no teacher they work with will ever get a chance at the idea from them either.

Reaction five. But if you eat carrot ice cream all the time, it will get very boring.

This person assumes that, just because a new idea is being concentrated on for a time, the presenter is thus expecting it to be taken up and used constantly. Of course it is true that everything gets boring, if you do it all the time.

A sub-category of this reaction is, "Some people won't like it". It is interesting that this problem (of future participant preferences) is not raised in relationship to things they already do!

Reaction six. I already make potatoes. This is nothing new.

Here the person has completely misunderstood the idea and has connected it to something that they DO know about.

Reaction seven. I 've been making carrot ice cream since 1969. It's nothing new.

continued

This may in fact be true. This person MAY have been using the idea for years already. Two things are worth checking, however. One is whether the idea they have been using really IS the same. The other is why they feel the need to pull date rank on the presenter.
A sub-category of this reaction is, "I'm sure I read a recipe for this in 1966 in a Delia Smith collection. This is not original" This participant implies that the presenter is trying to pass off plagiarised material as their own. The other assumption is that only totally original ideas are worth discussing.

Reaction eight. I've heard about this, I think. Cream cheese...it's the same thing isn't it?

Oh dear...a real scramble this one. The presenter will have to get into the other idea (cream cheese) and discuss it's features in order to then unravel differences between it and the new idea presented. Hmmmm!

Reaction nine. What size and colour of carrot do you need? Are small ones best?

I do this one myself a lot. I want so much to learn about the new idea that I ask a thousand questions. I have recently understood however that this is probably a control mechanism on my part. As I dictate the order and type of explanation by my questions, I effectively prevent the presenter from explaining things THEIR way.

Reaction ten. But I haven't got time to make this on top of everything else!!

This harassed participant seems to feel they HAVE to use the idea immediately. They see their busy life becoming ever more stressful as a result.

Reaction eleven. Have you learnt how to make carrot sorbet yet?

This participant knows more perhaps than the presenter and, if this is said in public rather than in private, also wants everyone to know that they know more.

Reaction twelve. Have you tried chocolate covered garlic?

This participant knows more perhaps than the presenter but, about a completely different subject! Again, if said in public, apparently they want everyone to know that they know more.

Reaction thirteen. It won't work. You can't make ice cream out of carrots. Well, not for children anyway. Er...well, not for adults then. Well then, not for adults in Outer Mongolia, where I come from.

Once it has been established that the participant does in fact have all the ingredients and equipment necessary for the situation they state they are in, there isn't a lot anyone can do to persuade them that the rules of the universe apply there too!

Reaction fourteen. That reminds me of the story about Peter Rabbit!

Free association from this participant. Most people seem able to ignore these sometimes pleasant distractions. It depends how many free associators there are in the group at one time.

Reaction fifteen. Are you telling me my raspberry yoghurt is no good?

This participant is in defensive mood and feels their normal practice has been attacked or demeaned. It's worth checking whether it has been or not.

Reaction sixteen. I've never made it but I think my uncle does something like this or maybe it's my neighbour...

Some participants learn best from friends, relatives and colleagues and so try to make a new idea more learnable by associating it to their significant others.

Reaction seventeen. How long does it keep for?

Ah! A genuine question from someone interested in learning! A breath of fresh air.

Reaction eighteen. Sorry what did you say?

There's always at least one participant who is so busy shuffling papers or talking to neighbours or thinking their own thoughts that they miss sections of a presentation.

Reaction nineteen. I'm sure that what the presenter says is quite true.

There is usually one participant who attempts to defend the presenter if they get the feeling that s/he is being subjected to a rough ride.

Reaction twenty. Ah! I see. Nice! I wonder, could I substitute squash with a little coconut added for the carrot, do you think?

This participant is willing not just to entertain the new but is also already mentally transferring it to their own situation and making changes to suit their context.

Some thoughts. What IS new?

As I have noticed different kinds of reaction in myself and others and have seen them rise again and again in different group settings, I have learned not so much about people or reasons or strategies for reactions, but mostly about what I think the "new" is. As a teacher and trainer, I have come to see that an idea is not old or worthless just because a person:

- is not interested in it
- can't understand it immediately
- loves it, hates it, fears it or is threatened by it on sight
- THINKS they already know about it
- knows about something else

Something is new, different and potentially useful, to me, if I can't already call it to mind, or use it in and adapt it for different situations whenever I want.
But of course I'm open to new or different definitions!

MEET A COLLEAGUE.....FROM ROMANIA.

Romania has lots of neighbours. Travelling clockwise from the top, it shares borders with the Ukraine and Moldova, The Black Sea, Bulgaria, Serbia and Hungary. There are two million Hungarians in the ethnically heterogeneous population of about 22 million. I travelled to the North West city of Cluj, the former Hungarian capital of Transylvania. I went, at Hallowe'en, for the second national conference of RATE, the Romanian Association of Teachers of English, held October 26-27th, 2001.

The conference was called "ELT-a shortcut to world integration". Integration is a keyword here now in all aspects of life...economic, political, social, and educational as Romania would like to enter the European Union and be able to join EU non-governmental agencies for example. Romania knows it is part of Europe and that its education system is good. but wants Europe to recognise this. With an economy rated 87th in the world (according to the Rough Guide) below Namibia and above Paraguay, EU membership may be a long time coming.

There were about 220 people at the conference and plenty of excellent presentations on debating, human rights, critical thinking, writing, literature, drama and culture.
While I was there I had the genuine pleasure of getting to know Monica Marasescu of the British Council Cluj.

TW. Monica, can I first ask you how you became a teacher?

MM. I became a teacher in 1973 after graduating from the faculty of Letters of "Babes-Bolyai" University in Cluj, Romania, and taught English in secondary schools in Cimpina and then in Cluj. In 1992 I was the lucky recipient of a 3-week scholarship for a BC summer course at Nottingham University, which meant a turning point in my career.

TW. Why did it mean so much to you to get that scholarship?

MM: Because it was a long-expected opportunity and at the same time unexpected as it happened so shortly after I moved to Cluj.
You see, the first time I was offered a scholarship was in the dark communist years of the late seventies or early eighties (I can't remember exactly). I was invited to the county educational inspectorate in Ploiesti. The personnel inspector started by asking me whether I had relatives abroad (meaning in the West). My brother had recently defected to the West. No other questions followed and I was crossed off the list. So the 1992 offer by the British Council and endorsed by the director of the English-Romanian Bilingual School in Cluj where I had recently got a job, happened when I was already an experienced teacher. It meant changing my approach and shifting to communicative teaching, in spite of the old traditional textbooks we were still using at the time. It also meant a useful exchange of ideas with teachers from about 20 countries worldwide. It was my first encounter with British culture as well as with a professional and rigorously organised course.

TW. And when did you move into training and mentoring?

MM. In 1995 I was offered the opportunity to become a mentor by Sue Mace, British Council ELT Regional Adviser, who organised the first mentor training courses in Romania. I enjoyed mentoring tremendously.

TW. What was it about it that you liked so much?

MM. During the mentor training course I came to realise that a good teacher was not necessarily a good mentor; also how important it was for a mentor to acquire specific skills: active listening, objective observation and giving non-judgemental feedback; showing empathy, which is essential in counselling. Besides, as Sue Mace was not just our mentor trainer but also the university methodologist responsible for part of the student teachers' university-based training, coherence and consistency with school-based training was ensured. This forms the basis of a successful partnership in initial training.

TW. So then how did your career develop?

MM. One and a half years later, in 1997, Sue asked me and my colleague Ada Vuscan to co-train with her and Angi Malderez on a national course in Cluj. It was a challenging opportunity for Ada and myself, even more so as we were being trained to be mentor-trainers while we were training others to become mentors! Though it was extremely tiring (we never slept more than3-4 hours per night), it was one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences in my life. For Angi it must have been the most exhausting fortnight in her life. While preparing the course with us for the next day she was, in parallel, also training us till the early hours of the morning, when she would start over again with untiring energy, patience and commitment.

In 1999, at the suggestion of Sue Mace again, 38 mentors from Romania applied to the Socrates Agency for funding to participate on a tailor-made mentor trainer training course at The School of Education (Leeds University). I was lucky to be one of the 38 trained there by Angi Malderez and Caroline Bodoczky, trainers and authors of the book Mentor Courses (CUP, 1999) As soon as we returned home, about ten of us started running non-ELT mentor courses, as there is a great demand for such training in Romania. Recently over10 more non-ELT courses were organised all over the country by the Ministry of Education and Research, with World Bank funding and ELT mentor trainers. Mentoring is more and more in demand, both for initial training and for in-service training, as the Ministry is paying increased attention to supporting newly qualified teachers by a mentoring system.. I definitely feel that not enough is being done by decision-makers in this respect.

TW. What subjects other than English have been touched on now?

MM. All, both sciences and humanities.

TW. What's your setting now?

continued

MM. I ran several mentor- training courses while a secondary school teacher before I switched to working for the British Council in my region; part of my new job is still ELT and education, so I continue to promote and help others organise different courses and events, whether ELT or non-ELT. In general, I do my best to help things happen.

TW. What do you enjoy about your job?
MM. The fact that it involves change all the time, and that I work with people. The teachers I work with are now a strong team. Thanks to the training they have gone through, they have been empowered with new skills and are capable of dealing with different situations, whether personally or professionally. English teachers are now ahead of other subject teachers in terms of openness to change in the ongoing educational reform.

TW. I think I witnessed this strong team work at the conference. I could see a team of women, who obviously enjoyed working together, doing everything from putting on local school troupes of singers and dancers, photocopying, delivering food, dressing up as witches for a skit on the social programme and supporting each other with humour and cigarettes throughout!

MM well, in this last respect, I don't let myself absorbed by the team...!

TW. What do you need from the groups of teachers you work with?
MM. I need them to take initiative so that their new abilities are made good use of and are disseminated to more and more teachers, and beyond ELT.

TW. Is there any area you feel a bit guilty not knowing more about?

MM. I think I feel guilty not knowing more about computers and IT teaching, to mention just one area.

TW. What are the special gifts and issues about working as a trainer or mentor in Romania rather than somewhere else do you think?

MM: You need to be dedicated to your cause, to stay in touch with the latest developments in your profession; to be able to adjust to the needs of the moment; to fight resistance to change and old mentalities; to be an initiator; and last but not least to network and disseminate all good practice and ideas.

TW. Good luck with it all Monica!

Our Sister Magazine

Pilgrims runs a web magazine for teachers called Humanising League Teaching. You can find it at **www.hltmag.co.uk**. It is free and aims to provide EFL teachers with "practical techniques as well as overarching ideas". The magazine is currently edited mostly by Mario Rinvolucri. An attractive feature of the webzine is that its editorship moves around the world from the UK to Uraguay, Poland, Brazil and other places. Take a look!

Feeding (back to) the Five Thousand

Julietta Schoenmann, UK

Introduction

This article comes out of a workshop on Course Design for Secondary Schools involving 112 participants in Thailand which was run by the author and a colleague (1).

It seemed evident from the outset that facilitating sessions with 112 people was going to be a challenge. Indeed, whereas pair and group discussion, mingling activities and warmers proved easy to manage and the participants entered each task with great enthusiasm, monitoring group discussion and getting feedback in plenary proved more problematic. In this article I will pose some key questions related to the role of plenary feedback in a training session, the difficulties that arise from working with large groups, describe the various strategies that were tried out and evaluate the extent to which they succeeded in enabling everyone to share their ideas.

Key Questions

1. Is a plenary stage necessary?
What is its function within a training session? Could it be considered redundant if the key issues have been raised and discussed at length within each group? On balance, no matter how unwieldy the numbers, I believe a plenary stage is important for the following reasons:

- It enables participants to hear views and opinions from other groups
- It helps to clarify or consolidate key points
- It offers the facilitator the opportunity to input or comment on what has been discussed
- It creates a sense of closure for one stage and allows the session to move on to the next stage

2. What are the problems of large plenaries?
Getting everyone's views in plenary is not possible with large numbers. The more confident members need little persuasion to take the floor whereas many others are understandably shy about coming to public microphones. Without amplification, however, people cannot hear each other well. The trainers and participants in our workshop discussed the necessity and difficulties of the plenary stage at the end of the first day and came up with a number of strategies to address the problem of how to exchange views in the larger group, bearing in mind the layout of the room (rows of tables with 5/6 participants seated at each organised into three columns) and the position of the microphones (see fig 1.)

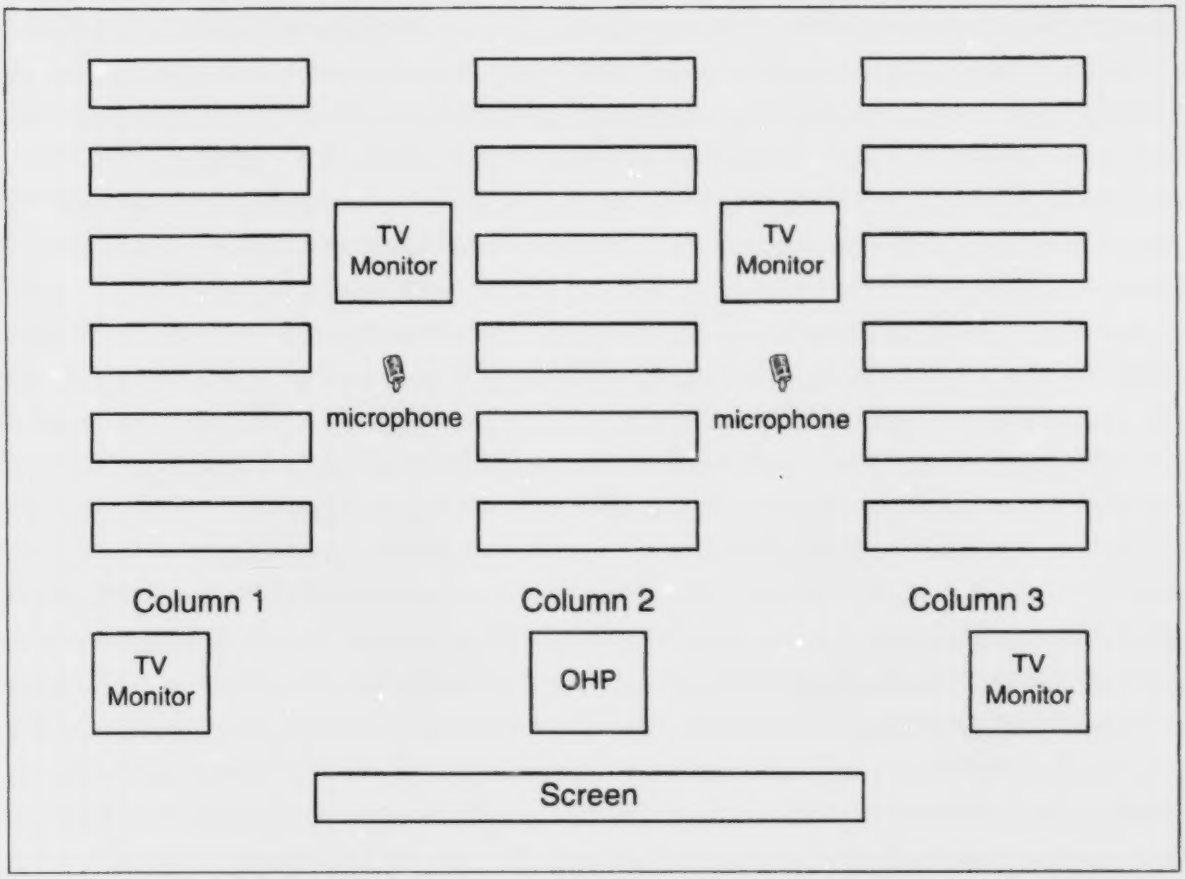

fig 1.

3. What strategies were suggested?

- Continue to invite anyone to share their views spontaneously at the microphone
- Put posters round the room and invite everyone to visit one, and to be prepared to share any comments and ideas at the microphone in the plenary feedback stage
- Ask all the participants in Column 1 to put up their posters after their group discussion and comment on each others' ideas. Columns 2 and 3 do the same in different parts of the room simultaneously.
- Group leaders monitor as effectively as possible and then give feedback in plenary
- Ask 3 different volunteers to monitor the group discussion going on at tables in each of the 3 columns in the room, to take notes and then report back using the microphone and giving a brief summary of their notes
- After discussion, invite groups of 5 on one table to join with another table to make groups of 10 who then nominate a spokesperson to give feedback at the microphone
- Ask groups of 10 to collate feedback onto a transparency and use the OHP to present their findings to the whole group

4. Which strategies proved useful?

Continue to invite anyone to spontaneously share their views spontaneously at the microphone.

This was perhaps the most obvious technique to use and one that generally works well in small groups. It proved problematic at the beginning of the course when participants were less relaxed but became more viable as a method of giving feedback later on when everyone felt more confident about speaking out in front of a large group. The evident drawback was that the same more vocal members of the group tended to want to share their ideas and thus became something of a dominant 'elite'. As the course progressed, this method was used less frequently though lively debate sometimes required spontaneous contributions from interested parties. Those who contributed often got rounds of applause which also helped to create a more positive and informal atmosphere.

Put posters round the room and invite everyone to visit one, and to be prepared to share any comments and ideas at the microphone in the plenary feedback stage.

continued

Poster displays are a fairly standard training technique but it seemed far more important to use them when there were such large numbers of participants involved. They seemed one of the best ways of getting everyone to share their ideas easily and therefore obviated the need for a lengthy summing up as everyone could read the same information.

Ask all the participants in Column 1 to put up their posters after their group discussion, read and comment on each others' ideas. Columns 2 and 3 do the same thing in different parts of the room simultaneously.

A variation on the previous strategy, but this time the sharing of poster material is confined to the 3 separate columns rather than all participants looking at every group's posters. This meant that people could give informal feedback to each other as they read the information displayed. It seemed a more intimate and personal way of going about things. It was still left to one of the facilitators to draw everything together between the three columns however which led to the old problem of 'one-way communication' i.e. they could hear us but couldn't respond freely with only two microphones.

Group leaders monitor as effectively as possible and then give feedback in plenary.

As there were only two facilitators we worried that we were missing a lot of what was being said. We therefore enlisted the support of the 13 regional supervisors to go around also monitoring the different groups. Supervisors were also willing to take the microphone and share their opinions which was appreciated by the participants. One evident drawback of this strategy was that we could only sample a few groups' views because time and participants' concentration spans wouldn't permit us to report on every group.

Ask 3 different volunteers to monitor the group discussion going on at tables in each of the 3 columns in the room, to take notes and then report back using the microphone and giving a brief summary of their notes.

This was done on a rotation basis so that a number of volunteers had the chance to act as monitors during the two weeks of the course. They performed the role with gusto and were keen to listen to each group and make brief notes. While listening to their feedback, participants felt relaxed enough to contest or clarify what was being said. This seemed like one of the more successful methods as it was wholly participant-centred and managed. It was tempting to choose the volunteers who were the best able to present their data clearly and efficiently but an effort was made to allow a greater cross-section of the group to take on this role.

After discussion, invite groups of 5 on one table to join with another table to make groups of 10 who then nominate a spokesperson to give feedback at the microphone.

Groups of 5 on one table readily joined with others on the table behind to produce larger groups that managed to hear each other, share ideas and generate further discussion despite the unwieldy numbers. The spokespeople gave brief summaries of what had been discussed which occasionally resulted in other spokespeople coming to the other microphone to engage in heated debate! A disadvantage of this technique was that groups of 10 do mean inevitably that the quieter members of the group don't have the same opportunities to contribute.

Groups of 10 collate feedback onto a transparency and use the OHP to present their findings to the whole group.

This was an effective way of getting each group to make their opinions known to a wider audience. The disadvantages were that dialogue was once again hampered by the fact that the presenter had access to the microphone and could only engage with others who were willing to come up to speak. In addition some groups' handwriting proved a little difficult to read by the rest of the group which tended to impede communication somewhat!

Summary

Though facilitating sessions with over a hundred people can be a challenge, it is certainly not impossible. As many trainers may find themselves in a similar position in the future, it may be constructive to draw several conclusions from the experience:

- Inviting the participants themselves to come up with solutions to the problem of giving feedback to a large group was a good way of involving them and gave them a greater sense of ownership of the course.
- Overcoming this obstacle demonstrated to teachers of large classes that a sizeable number of participants/students/trainees etc need not be a barrier to effective communication and could be taken as an example of good practice.
- Conversely, it is valuable for facilitators to gain an insight into the difficulties that their trainees face when trying to teach large classes!

It should be added that the enthusiasm and willingness of all concerned made our jobs far easier and led us to the conclusion that though facilitating sessions for over a hundred teachers was not ideal, the strategies that we devised as a group enabled everyone to have their views heard and made them feel valued as contributors.

Note

The two-week workshop was facilitated by two trainers – the author and Tim Conway, a Bangkok-based freelance ELT consultant – in north-eastern Thailand for 93 teacher trainers, 6 Bangkok-based Supervisors and 13 Regional Supervisors and was jointly organised by the Ministry of Education Supervisory Unit and The British Council.

I would like to thank Tim Conway for his helpful comments and suggestions offered during the writing of this article.

CURRENT RESEARCH

Classroom Interrogations – how productive?

Fiona Farr, University of Limerick, Ireland

Background

This article reports an action research project undertaken recently by the author with the co-operation of her trainee teachers. The objective was to address an issue near but not so dear to the hearts of trainers, teachers and trainees. It is a quest for answers at both a theoretical and pragmatic level and aims to advance our understanding of classroom question and answer exchanges. By making the results available to trainers and discussing the relevant issues it is hoped that we can in turn equip trainees with some necessary buoyancy aids to prevent drifting in those difficult discussion moments in the language classroom.

The issue of which I write has become increasingly apparent over the years as I spend more time in the teaching practice cycle with inexperienced teachers. I invite you to peruse some of the comments voiced by trainee teachers on a more than regular basis, "The lead-in discussion was a total flop and the lesson went downhill from there...My questions didn't get them going...I spent hours preparing that discussion and it was disastrous...Why couldn't I get them to answer???".

Why indeed? Such echoes prompted the de facto observational case study now reported, which was carried out at the University of Limerick, Ireland where series of Graduate Diploma/MA in TEFL courses have been running for close to a decade. Essentially the author wished to investigate the type of questions trainees were using and what sort of answers EFL students were producing with the ultimate aim of improving the temporal quality of classroom discussions conducted in the teaching practice classroom.

Related Studies

Having first become aware of the types of problems facing our trainees my initial reaction as both a trainer and an academic was to scurry for the books. Many mainstream TEFL texts proved less than enlightening on this particular issue. However more general educational literature such as Brown and Wragg (1993) and Perrott (1982) provide a comprehensive account of question types, functions, productivity and also appropriate questioning strategies for the classroom. In terms of EFL/ESL studies a few are worthy of mention at this point.

In 1975 Sinclair and Coulthard published an extensive report which was the culmination of a two-year research project funded by the Social Science Research Council in the UK. They examined the type of discourse used by teachers and pupils in the classroom. The well-know and much utilised 'Initiation Response Feedback' (IRF) model of classroom interaction is documented in great detail in this publication and the issues of teacher dominated classrooms and power relationships discussed. Almost 10 years later in 1984, White and Lightbown found that in addition to teachers asking an inordinate amount of questions in the classroom they rarely waited longer than 2 seconds for a reply. They suggest that fewer repetitions and longer wait times should increase student productivity.

Long has published with both Pica and Sato on the area of teacher questioning in the ESL classroom. In 1986, he and Pica examined the difference in linguistic performance between experienced and inexperienced teachers. This study based in Philadelphia was an extension on previous work and drew on data collected both inside and outside of the classroom. The more important findings confirmed the results of Long and Sato (1983) that more display questions (e.g. Is today Friday?) were employed in classroom talk than in informal conversation, and when examining classroom language they found that there were a surprising number of similarities between the type of language employed by experienced and inexperienced teachers in terms of the number of display to referential questions asked (almost 4 to 1), the amount of teacher talk, the number of confirmation checks, and the number of questions, declaratives and imperatives. The powerful position of teachers was very much apparent among both experienced and inexperienced teachers in terms of the IRF model. Essentially, the conclusion was that the influence of the classroom environment, in terms of teacher role and performance, far outweighs the effects of experience.

Brock, in 1986, examined the effect of introducing more referential questions (e.g. What do you think about blood sports?) into the language classroom. She found that as a direct result of increasing the frequency of referential questions student answers became longer and more syntactically complex. An interesting result is found in terms of the average numbers of words produced by students in reply to display questions as opposed to referential questions. Display questions produced 4.2 word answers while referential produced 10 word answers! These research studies, among others, provide some theoretical and empirical frameworks within which to analyse the context and problems of classroom questioning.

The Procedure

Video recorded data from advanced level EFL classes in the Spring Semester 1999 taught by pre-service trainee teachers coming to the end of their nine-month training period was collected for later analysis. It should be noted that all teaching practice (TP) sessions are video recorded as a matter of routine and the trainees were not aware at the time of recording that certain aspects of their teaching, namely questioning strategies would be scrutinised for research purposes. The ten trainees involved were, of course, later informed and their permission for use was granted. Therefore the trainees were simply teaching as usual and probably did not affect any behavioural changes that may have influenced the findings outlined below. From a selection of ten lessons (and ten trainees) five were selected on the basis of suitability for the study, that is, they

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contained substantial discussion phases. From these five the part of the lesson whose broad aim it was to promote discussion on the topic of the day was orthographically transcribed into a mini-corpus. These excerpts were analysed in terms of trainee question types and resultant student answers in order to determine possible relationships in this context.

The analysis was conducted within a traditional framework of the syntactic categories of Wh questions, yes/no questions, alternative questions, declarative questions and a related functional subcategory of confirmation/clarification checks. From a functional perspective, in terms of anticipated student response questions were classified into narrow display, broad display and referential. Display questions being those where the teacher typically knows the answer in advance and referential those where no such pre-knowledge exists. Narrow display are questions to which the teacher knows the answer and there is only one anticipated response in terms or either content or form. Broad display questions allow for student choice in terms of content or form from a range of possibilities already known to the teacher (Banbrook and Skehan 1989). Wait times (of more than three seconds) after the question had been posed were also examined. There were no substantial pauses after EFL students had produced answers and therefore these wait times were not included.

The Results

Number of trainee teachers:	5
Total time transcribed:	33 minutes 3 seconds
Total number of words:	4018
Number of trainee words (TTT):	2745
Number of student words (STT):	1273
Ratio of TTT to STT:	2.16 : 1
Total number of questions asked:	139
Average number of questions per minute:	4.2
Of which Self Repetitions/Reformulations:	111
Wait Time after Asking a Question:	38
Trainee Interruptions of Student Answering:	23

Question Types Used by Trainees

	Narrow Display	Broad Display	Referential	TOTAL
Wh questions	26	50	9	85
Yes/No questions	6	19	3	28
Alternative questions	2	0	1	3
Declarative questions	4	5	0	9
Confirmation checks/ requests for canfication				14
Total	38	74	13	139
Wait time occurances	16	18	4	38

Student Replies According to Question Type

	Average Number of Words per Reply
Narrow display questions	3.34
Broad display questions	12.44
Referential questions	17.92
Wh questions	10.51
Yes/No questions	7.36
Alternative questions	9.33
Declarative questions	18.33

Discussion

1. Display and Referential Questions

The number of display questions used in this setting far outweighs the number of referential questions by a ratio of 8.6 : 1. This is consistent with earlier studies (Long and Sato, 1983). However the broad display question is by far and away the most substantial category accounting for exactly half of the total number of questions posed. This result is encouraging from the point of view that while the classroom setting by its very nature may necessitate an emphasis on display questions trainees are at least trying to encourage more open ended discussion through the use of broad display question types. And indeed broad display questions produce answers containing an average of 12.44 words compared with 3.34 for narrow display questions. This permits a certain air of complacency or at least cause for optimism. While it is possibly advisable from a logical viewpoint to encourage more referential type questions in the language classroom, this is probably unreasonable from a pedagogic perspective. After all, the classroom, both language and otherwise, is usually (and somewhat unfortunately) a contrived context that is governed by rules inherent to its uniqueness. One of these, unfortunate or not, is that the teacher has valid pedagogic reasons and objectives for asking questions, which do in the long term aid learning through attention to detail and a purposeful focussing. It would be most arrogant of trainers to insist on an increased number of referential questions when qualified teachers perform much worse than the trainees do in this respect. They may simply be advised of the increased productivity that comes with referential type questioning. Of much more immediate importance is the distinction between the productivity of narrow and broad display questions.

2. Syntactic Distinctions

Trainees are asking primarily "Wh" type questions (more than half of the total). These questions produce answers with an average of 10.51 words. Again, this seems to be a reasonably satisfactory situation until we see that declarative questions produce 18.33 word answers. This may be due to the fact that declarative questions place more demand on paralinguistic features such as gesture, eye contact and intonation, thus trainees are forced to make a distinct effort when using declarative questions and students seem to reward such efforts with equally enthusiastic responses. Also such question types are more naturalistic (e.g. You haven't seen any homeless people in

Ireland, here in Limerick?) and may appeal to the students' affective domain on an interpersonal level. Perhaps for a brief moment the student-teacher power relationship that is reinforced by Wh and yes/no questions disappears and both parties are communicating as interested and interesting human beings in a conversation. It is recommended that trainees be advised of the advantages of employing declarative questions and more importantly be briefed in the techniques and strategies required to allow these forms to be interpreted as questions.

3. Related Factors

These statistics provide us with yet another grim reminder of the reality of the teacher controlled classroom. Even trainees have assumed the role of dominant teacher and speak more than twice as much as students at the stage of the lesson where their aim ironically was to facilitate student discussion. It seems the IRF model is very much alive and kicking and teachers even at the training stage still love the sound of their own voices. It is pertinent to ask why this is the case. In an attempt to determine whether it may be the case that my trainees were picking up these habits from either my teaching or possibly that of other trainers/teachers, I recorded and analysed one of my own training sessions with them. During that part of my session where the aim was to promote discussion on English accents and speech standards, four central reference questions were combined with a number of redirections and confirmation/check questions, the details of which are too long to present in this article. It must be said that the results are not directly comparative to the trainee results as the language level was not a factor and also the degree of familiarity was much higher in my case (there are also other factors at play such as maturity, power, roles etc.). However, to my relief and perhaps surprise a little, in a ten minute period my trainees spoke twice as much as I did. Admittedly, this ratio could be even better but it did at least free me from some of the responsibility for my trainees' undesirable talking and questioning habits.

Moving back to our present discussion, we have seen that trainees are generally asking the right *type* of questions in order to get extended student replies (e.g. "Wh" questions such as "What helps you in your decision when picking a candidate for election?") yet they are somehow taking action that partially invalidates their questioning efforts. How is this happening? I would like to draw attention to a couple of points. Firstly, out of 139 questions posed an amazing 111 were repetitions or reformulations of the original question. And even though this might seem to be a reasonable strategy to employ to facilitate comprehension, the sheer quantity of repetition is cause for worry especially considering earlier research findings by White and Lightbown that response rates decrease following second and subsequent question repetitions. Secondly trainees paused on only 38 occasions after asking a question. This means that on over 100 questioning turns the trainee either didn't wait for an answer or insisted on an immediate response. This must surely be counterproductive to generating discussion and very divergent from real life conversation, which is constantly punctuated with pauses and time lapses. It would seem that trainees feel uncomfortable with classroom silences and sense the need to fill in any temporal gaps before they even occur. A case of prevention is better than cure, I would say, not helped by the fact that trainees are usually in a formal assessment situation. And thirdly trainees interrupted students 23 times while answering. This number however includes turns that facilitate, prompt and encourage, all of which are pragmatically necessary and therefore reasonable.

4. Other Trainee Talking Turns

There were many turns taken by trainees when they weren't asking questions during the 'interrogation' part of the lesson. What did the other trainee talk consist of? A detailed look at the data shows that there are perhaps two areas in which trainees spoke too much. One worrying finding is that on 103 occasions trainees echoed, reformulated or commented on student replies - this must surely be a waste of potential STT for the most part at least (see also Lindstromberg 1988). Of course some of this type of discourse is necessary and natural but 103 times for 139 questions seems excessive given the trainees' aims. The second cause for concern stems from the 31 occurrences when trainees provided extended (and partially unnecessary) lead in information to questions.

5. A More Qualitative Interpretation

It is perhaps time the heed the advice of Mc Carthy (1998), who offers professional words of caution to researchers when he says, "a corpus needs qualitative and quantitative analysis to be pedagogically useful". This conforms to suggestions made by Banbrook and Skehan (1989) who warn of the dangers of "crude collection and analysis" of classroom interaction language. They insist, and rightly so, on supplementary qualitative interpretation and profiling of teachers and students over time to prevent any mis-judgements or mis-evaluations on classroom performances. I am reminded of the "Forget the facts, tell me what you know"! In respect of qualitative interpretations I would consider myself to be at a distinct advantage having worked very closely with all trainees involved in this research for about an eight-month period prior to the data collection period.

Relevant issues will be raised through comparison of the performances of the most and least successful trainees in terms of TTT-STT speaking ratios. A trainee called Brendan (invented names used throughout) was the only one to speak less than his students and produced a ratio of .73:1. Maria on the other end of the scale spoke more than ten times as much as her students did. Ironically Brendan asked ten fewer questions than Maria in a five minute period where Maria produced 28 questions and Brendan 18. However Maria used 19 narrow display questions to Brendan's 5. Brendan had a below average number of reformulations and repetitions of questions posed, and used pauses much more than other trainees. These features explain the level of STT in terms of the quantitative findings outlined above. While this is part of the picture there is more to paint.

Let's briefly profile Maria as a trainee teacher. She is quite serious, but earnest and committed. She has invested a lot into her postgraduate studies in TEFL and as a result puts herself under a lot of pressure to perform and achieve. She is very focussed to the point of being pedantic at times. During this lesson she was dressed entirely in black and in general had a very severe physical appearance and a serious air. She tended not to keep very good eye contact during questioning and even looked away from the students at times while pacing across the front of the room almost regimentally. There were quite a lot of hesitations and Maria

cont

constantly referred to her plan and notes in attempts to stay on track. She seemed more preoccupied with eliciting specific lexical items despite her intended aim of promoting discussion. These factors combined with the inappropriate question type choice gave rise to a teacher-dominated classroom with too much TTT.

Brendan on the other hand we may expect to be quite different but this, unfortunately for me and my research is not really so. He too is quite serious, earnest, introverted and reflective. I am reminded of a colleague whose words of wisdom to Brendan were that his lessons were "technically and methodologically strong but needed a bit of umph!!". In the classroom it is fair to say that Brendan works at a slow constant pace and remains quite aloof from the students at times. He is however a very attentive listener and is always very well prepared for his lessons. In the lesson examined he asked questions openly, used little nomination, gesture, or movement. He didn't always keep eye contact but paused much more often than his colleagues after posing a question. So what then was the difference that made the difference and allowed him to speak even less than the students. Primarily the answer lies in a combination of the type of question he used and his effective use of pausing. As well as asking broad display questions, he used more referential questions and also declarative questions than Maria and in general more than the other trainees. So effectively his questioning carried him and carried him well. You may be wondering if the topic or students had any influence and surprisingly in this study it didn't. Brendan taught the same group on the same day continuing with the same topic *after* his colleague Mark, who performed poorly in terms of eliciting student talk.

Conclusion

By way of briefly concluding this article I would like to share some advice that I now offer to trainees as a result of this study,

"Continue to use plenty broad display questions and try to add in a few referential,
Keep working with Wh questions and definitely add in more declarative type questions,
Ask intelligent questions that will challenge students at both a linguistic and cognitive level,
Repetition is not going to increase the productivity of a question in most situations,
Interpersonal skills are vital, especially eye contact, gesture and facial expression,
Nominate when you need to,
Give students time before and after they reply,
Encourage student student interaction".

And that's the story of me, my students and their students. I hope it will be of use to you, your students and their students.

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Emotional Literacy

by Harriet Goodman, UK

I was lucky enough to meet Harriet Goodman at a meeting for trainers and consultants in London. Later I interviewed her to find out more about her work as Education Project Director of an Emotional Literacy Initiative in East London schools.

TW. Greetings Harriet! Could you tell me first what "Emotional Literacy" means?

HG. Yes. Hello! Emotional literacy means recognising, understanding, handling and appropriately expressing our own emotions. This, so we can appreciate other people_s emotional experience. This understanding helps the sort of open conversation that allows us all— parents, students, teachers, carers and managers—to engage with facts, perspectives and ideas of which we were previously unaware.

TW. How can schools create settings in which the emotional literacy of teachers and students can grow?

HG. Well, let me tell you about our initiative. Three schools, two primary and one secondary, in the London borough of Newham, have agreed to take part in a three-year project which will involve working collaboratively with staff, students and parents.

TW. And what happens?

HG. Each year begins with a survey of staff and students to ascertain what factors are affecting their emotional literacy and what strategies are most likely to enhance it.

TW. Can you give me an example of a factor and a strategy?

HG. The year 8 students we surveyed at the secondary school reported a lot of difficulty in working with other students, even though they love lessons where they are allowed to work in groups. Sometimes it's because they are told to work with people they don't get along with, without enough support to negotiate their differences. But sometimes it's because they do sit with their friends, which can mean they get distracted or over-excited. Next term we will be running "discussion clubs" for students to give them a chance to explore their feelings about working and learning together. Eventually we hope to bring that sort of discussion right into the classroom, helping teachers develop collaborative group work not just in PE and drama, but also in the core curriculum subjects.

TW. How do you get kids to tell you about this sort of thing?

HG. We used an open-ended questionnaire with the secondary-school students, and then we interviewed one boy and one girl from each tutor group, encouraging them to tell stories about when they feel good and when they feel not so good at school. With the primary-school children, we used more visual techniques.

TW. Could you give me an example here?

HG. With children in years one through six we used the draw and write technique originally developed by Noreen Whetton. We asked each child to draw a picture of a time when they were feeling good at school, and to write around the image what they were saying and thinking. They were allowed to ask for help with the writing. Then they went on to draw themselves at a time they felt not so good, and also to draw who or what made them feel better.

TW. Then what happens to the responses?

HG. The responses are are fed back in November/December and used as a basis for developing agreeing strategies to be tried out over the spring and summer terms. The key to the whole approach is to develop opportunities for real dialogue: times and spaces where people can speak freely about their own experiences, can hear others speak equally freely, and can learn to deal with issues that provoke strong feelings. Through dialogue in the classroom, in the staff room, in the playground and beyond, people become engaged in thinking about how the school can foster the sort of inner security that enables people to listen to others and reflect on what they hear.

TW. Can you give me a short, practical example of a dialogue activity?

HG. In one of the primary schools, we have been asked to help develop a school council where every child will feel able to bring their problems and suggestions. This will only work if it is based on regular opportunities in every classroom, not only for people to discuss practical problems and possible solutions, but also to share their feelings.

TW. It must take some courage to plunge a school into an open-ended process that will probe issues often left unspoken and unaddressed, issues such as where staff get the personal support to do this emotional work with young people, as well as the usual communication issues faced by any organisation.

HG. Yes we are very lucky to have senior staff at the three schools fully committed to the initiative.

TW. Apart from teachers and students who communicate openly—which is pretty grand in itself!—what other results do you foresee?

HG. We plan to publish an Emotional Literacy Handbook in May 2002 and eventually to develop guidelines for schools and other organisations that work with young people to use in promoting emotional literacy.

TW. If people want to know more, where can they go?

HG. They can write to Antidote, 3rd Floor, Cityside House, 40 Adler Street, London E1 1EE, to ask for more information. We'll invite them to sign up as members of Antidote for £25 a year, which means they will get regular copies of "Antidote", the newsletter of the campaign for emotional literacy, with lots of information, inspiration, and links to other people doing important work in this area.

TW. Yes, I had a look at that. It was great to read expressions such as "Recognising and honoring other voices", and "Thinking and feeling are always linked but the processes within organisations mean that they are not often experienced or expressed together". I also learned about some things such as quality circle time, inquiry time and dialogue sessions. I'd like to follow those up.

HG. Then there is the web site too at www.antidote.org.uk.

TW. Thanks Harriet!

Harriet Goodman, Education Project Director
Antidote: Campaign for Emotional Literacy
Telephone: 020 7247 3355
Website: www.antidote.org.uk
Reply to: harriet@antidote.org.uk

INTERNET WEBSITES OF INTEREST TO TEACHER TRAINERS/EDUCATORS

A first trawl.

Although there are many internet sites of interest to EFL students and teachers, (including many that are trying to sell them books and courses), after several hours of trawling I came up with relatively few sites specifically designed to help us, teacher trainers, mentors, educators in our work. I then put out a plea to trainers on eltecs, iatefl and tesol lists (see below) and had many helpful suggestions acknowledged below.

http://www.tttjournal.co.uk

This is the home site of this journal. It is very easy on the eye and gives information on the present issue, how to subscribe and contribute to and advertise in its pages, its history and an index of past articles. It also has a useful bibliography for language teacher educators. An archive of "golden oldies", articles from the early issues that are now hard to find, is slowly being built. The site is refreshed three times a year.

http://www.ihes.com/ttsig

This is the site of the special interest group (SIG) for teacher trainers/educators of the Europe- based professional organisation IATEFL. Apart from listing membership and events and the contents of back issues, it is a little sparse at present but does have a chat line that you can join. Like most chat lines, it goes dormant for periods but then livens up again! It has recently had a new initiative of week- long fielded discussions on topics such as encouraging group sharing on TT courses.

http://www.personales.jet.es/bazkat/index.htm

This takes you to the teacher development SIG of IATEFL. There are past issues of the newsletter and papers from recent conferences, a letters page, a TD bibliography and events list.

http://www.iatefl.org

This is the main site for IATEFL giving you an overview of the two SIGs above and access to the management SIG that has some interesting articles on e.g. "Managing TD" and "From teaching skills to management skills"

http://www.britishcouncil.org/english/eltecs/index/htm

I would recommend joining ELTeCS, the English Language teaching contacts scheme. It promotes networking between ELT professionals across the world. It has active discussion lists for teachers and trainers by region (you can join more than one region) and has other natty features such as a listing of national ELT publications in many countries around the world.

http://www.education.leeds.ac.uk/~edusbo/index.html

This site, maintained by Simon Borg, has resources such as bibliography, events, ideas, links, quotes for teachers, teacher educators and researchers interested in the field of language teacher cognition.

http://www.ett.mofet.macam98.ac.il

This site looks promising at first, stating that it is the international, bi-annual online journal for EFL educator looking to the net and its resources for CONTACT the association for EFL teacher education in Israel. The Volume 1, Spring issue is up with some six pieces in it but it doesn't look as if the site has been refreshed since 1999. The site links to ETT, the TT research branch of the Ministry of Education, Israel.

http://www.aera.net/divisions/

This address gets you to the American Educational Research Association. If you then click on AERA K division, you will get to a US based academic group on teaching and teacher education. It posts regular newsletters of academic content.

http://www.tesol.org

This will get you to the US based professional organisation for TESOL. There is a special interest section for teacher education that you can, theoretically, access via this site. However their web page is often not found or cannot be displayed. Maybe you will have better luck than me! There are some related past columns from TESOL Matters.

Those were the only sites I could find specifically for ELT teacher trainers. However, there are a lot of sites that we can use with teacher trainees to create sessions, to support our own sessions or for joint adventures. Examples here are:

http://www.ling.lancs.ac.uk/groups/crile/EPCentre/epcentre.htm

This site gives newsletters, events, links resources and contacts on Exploratory Practice, a way for teachers and learners to understand aspects of their classroom practice that puzzle them through the use of normal pedagogical procedures as investigative tools.

http://www.britishcouncil.org/teachenglish.htm

Teachenglish brings together all the BC web resources for everyone concerned with ELT. Thus you can get an overview of ELTECS (see above) and other initiatives such as the new online journal for teachers using CALL in the classroom.

http://www.eltforum.com

Hosted by Pearson Education this subscription- based site (£20 p.a.), has a topic each month (e.g. grammar, correction, discussion) together with a bibliography, a development pack of related articles taken from ELT periodicals, and live chat sessions which are later transcribed. Thus if you wanted to explore the forum topic of the month with your trainees, you could join forum and download the materials and join in.

http://www.english-to-go.com

If you are working on lesson planning with your teachers in training, you could use this site as it has photocopiable lesson plans based on Reuters news stories, by topic and at several different levels.

http://www.etprofessional.com

This web site of the paper- based practical magazine for teachers, chooses a topic a month (e.g. speaking) backing it up with four or five articles that have appeared in ETp. You could thus print these articles off as support for a training session or homework on one of their topics. If you want selected articles go to:
www.edunet.com/etp/articles.htm

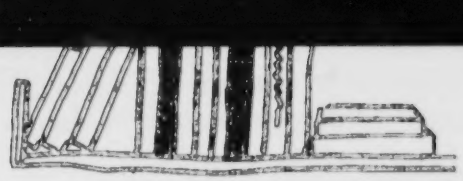
http://www.developingteachers.com

This web site gives weekly teaching tips, a newsletter, lesson plans and a few articles. You could use it by reading, discussing and trying out the tips in teaching practice?

http://www.hltmag.co.uk/index.htm

A Pilgrims hosted site, this is the sister internet magazine to the journal for teacher trainers that you are reading now! Both the present and all past issues of the webzine "Humanising Language Teaching" can be viewed online or downloaded. It is for teachers but some of the articles could be used to start a good discussion amongst teachers in training.

Please do let the editor know of any other sites useful to teacher trainers, mentors, educators and we will run this column again!



PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

This column is designed to keep you informed of recent publications in ELT and related fields and to save you time by giving swift descriptions of each publication so that you can decide whether it's for you or not.

The host family survival kit by Nancy King and Ken Huff. (1997) Intercultural Press. ISBN 1-877864-37-4. The book provides an overview of hosting year- long international and exchange students, defines the role that students play in the host family, outlines the skills needed by the host family and discusses the effect of culture on the relationship. Recommendations are given on e.g. arrival, settling in, deepening the relationship, culture shock, holidays, pre-departure, readjustment. Written from the USA but nevertheless an easy, interesting read with many valid points.

Choosing and using music in training by Liz Brant and Tony Harvey. (2001) Gower Pubs. ISBN 0-566-08426-0. Pocket sized, hardback plus CD of 75 minutes of music. A tiny bit of: theory, explanation of how trainers use music, (to welcome participants, help them be creative, increase energy, reflect, go away positively) equipment, permissions, and then a play list and bibliography. The CD tracks are in part machine made musak but, if you are not too picky about your versions, some very useable music.

The excellent trainer by Di Kamp. (1996) Gower Pubs. ISBN 0-566-07694-2. If you'd like to know about NLP and you are a trainer, this book makes an interesting combination of the two by applying NLP principles to trainer skills and qualities, the preparation, delivery and follow up of training sessions and to personal and professional development..

Change forces, the sequel by Michael Fullan. (1998) Falmer Press. ISBN 0-7507-0755-0. About making a difference in the lives of young people, this slim paperback presents conflict, diversity and resistance as potentially positive. The author is an international authority on educational reform and uses concepts form chaos, complexity and evolutionary theories. It's wordy, almost impossible to just dip in and out of, but thought provoking in the long term.

Learning journals by Jennifer Moon. (1999) Kogan Page Pubs. ISBN 0-7494-3045-1. Defining learning journals to include portfolios, diaries, personal records and books the author looks at the role of journals in promoting learning, their use in academic, professional and personal development and their assessment. Practical methods, examples, activities and a full bibliography included. Small print. Interesting.

Reflections on the target language by Peter Neil. (1997) CILT. ISBN 1-874016-80-1. The use of the target foreign language in secondary schools in widely advocated and confronts busy classroom teachers with real problems.

continu

This book explores the use of the target language (TL) by ten German as a foreign language teachers. It analyses the TL from their perspective, looks at the teachers' use of TL, their own language learning problems and the students' point of view. Set in N. Ireland. Carefully researched. Interesting.

How to teach grammar by Scott Thornbury. (1999) Longman Pubs. ISBN 0582-339324. For ELT teachers of any level of experience who are curious, confused or unconvinced about the teaching of grammar. Sections deal with what grammar is, why it should be taught explicitly or implicitly, how to judge a good grammar lesson, sample lessons for a variety of approaches to teaching grammar. Photocopiable training tasks plus answer key, further reading. Clear, readable, non –polemical, helpful. Recommended.

Discourse and context in language teaching by M. Celce-Murcia and E. Olshtain (2000) CUP. ISBN 0-521-64837-8. After two introductory chapters on discourse and pragmatics, the authors show how a discourse perspective can enhance the teaching of pronunciation,, grammar, vocabulary, the four skills and can improve curriculum development language assessment and classroom research. Each chapter ends with discussion questions and activities . Large book. Small print. Useful for in-service training programmes and one for the reference shelf.

Personalizing language learning by G.Griffiths and K. Keohane (2000) CUP. ISBN 0-521-633648. Practical activities for teachers wanting to make language learning more person-centred when starting courses, warming up, and working on self awareness and assertion, values and course closing. Written up in recipe form, this book reclassifies lots of old favourites so they are now between one pair of covers.

How to use the internet in ELT by Dede Teeler. (2000) Longman Pubs. ISBN 0582-339316. 120 pages. Text divisions are: what is the internet, the internet and teacher development, the internet as materials source and as classroom tool, internet- based activities and the internet as a course book. Practical activities for each section. Useful graphics and easy to read layout and texts.

The internet and the classroom by Gavin Dudeney. (2000) CUP. ISBN 0-52178373-9. 190 pages. Text divisions are: guidelines (software, finding and classifying resources, www and email), activities (for basic introductory classes and then by themes like the cinema, the environment, and by language points), photocopiable resources, projects (local and global) advanced net and frequently asked questions. Very useful.

Network-based language teaching: concepts and practice. Eds. M. Warschauer and R. Kern (2000) CUP Applied Linguistics series. ISBN 0-521-667429. Each of the ten chapters on, on-line communication for second language learning including uses of email, www, and real-time writing, is contributed by someone who has done extensive research on the topic. Scholarly, well-referenced.

Team development games for trainers by R.Stuart (1998) Gower Pubs. ISBN 0-566-079186. Hb. 59 games designed to improve assertiveness, communication, creativity, decision-making, influencing, listening, planing, problem-solving and time management. In recipe format and written for all work environments it is thus refreshing but wil Ineed adapting for ELT.

THE IATEFL SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP FOR TEACHER TRAINERS/ EDUCATORS JANUARY E-MAIL DISCUSSION

Background

I was invited to field a discussion for the SIG in January 2002. The topic I chose was "How can a teacher trainer encourage horizontal sharing of a group's knowledge, experience, and views during a course?"
About twenty people joined in over five days. Below is a summary of the main points. ("P" and "Ps" means Participant(s))

Times when/reasons why horizontal sharing in a group can be good

- All teachers have classroom experience so it is respectful to give this credit
- It's good for the atmosphere, boosts trainee self-confidence and self-esteem, acknowledges them as professionals and shows that (their) experience is valued
- Teachers love sharing ideas and experiences
- Airing strong professional disagreement is okay
- "Disagreements" are often actually different perspectives based on different contexts anyway
- Group members will usually come up with teacher generated agreement as to contextual factors supporting differing sides of a debate. This is good
- If the trainer always gives the answers, it leads to reliance on the expert. Experts in human, book, photocopy or web site form are not always around
- It helps the teacher to see SHE is an expert
- It encourages friendships and interest in and responsiveness to others
- It allows teachers to articulate their belief systems rather than just keeping their heads down in silent agreement. It can be good if Ps find out that others feel the same way they do
- It helps Ps to improve their communicative and interactive skills, takes them out of an impasse, enhances expertise and gives new lease of life so can be therapeutic in the sense of relaxing and restorative
- A wealth of knowledge can be pooled
- Ps have an opportunity to speak about themselves. While talking, one often reconsiders, reformulates and understands one's own thoughts better and this brings about surprising awareness

Times when/reasons why horizontal sharing can be bad

- Conflicts might arise from the group's discussions
- Teachers who know each other well already and are

in conflict might derail the interaction
- Some trainees do not believe in the knowledge produced in the interactive group work alone. They want trainer input and ample reading
- Some students who have a non- constructivist view of knowledge want a definitive answer
- Teachers who have succeeded through a competitive rather than a co-operative system don't see the need for change
- Some trainers use a tone or language that forces trainees into conformity
- Doubts, fears and confusing thoughts can be shared too Are we qualified to handle this?
- Ps might contribute strong personal stuff
- Some trainers do strange stuff like tying people up with ropes or getting into therapy issues which is not what Ps pay for and is potentially embarassing.
- Some Ps may feel they can't refuse to join in an activity because the trainer is in a position of authority
- The trainer is the most experienced in the room and is being paid so should not duck responsibilities

How to get around some of the disadvantages

Choose classroom activities that work. Reject ones that might be emotionally threatening or that go beyond what is reasonable to expect from the syllabus
- Let people opt out of any activity they don't want to do
- Make sure the trainer has good group management skills
- The trainer makes rapid written summaries of key arguments on board as Ps argue, then summarizes the notes, checking with Ps the summary is okay
- Use interactive work as a bridge to reading, tutorials, class room research.
- Use a feedback form with questions on it such as "What do you intend to remember from the discussion we just had?
- The trainer should "leave the room" gradually when working with teachers who are keen on a "right or wrong" approach
- Show how we none of us can be 100% PERFECT so there are no experts really
- Provide opportunities for success
- Discourage showing off
- Train groups in active listening techniques
- Guide people away from self- disclosure. Meet Ps who have strong emotions one to one in the coffee breaks. Listen well but don't get involved. Give professional contacts if needed
- Don't just facilitate, moderate, support and elaborate
- ELT trainers know more about social skills than they think
- Some teachers may be happy to be tied up with rope!
- Some trainers are happy to support teachers in their personal problems

Practical ideas to encourage horizontal sharing

- Gillie Cunningham's A (for accept) R (for reject) M (for modify) where ten statements are given to trainees to read and A, R or M before group discussion and sharing of examples from classroom experience
- Add up the total years of experience in the group. Compare this with trainer's fewer years
- Have a "Sharing slot" at end of each session
- Show that you the trainer are always learning horizontally too by referring to your colleagues and others you have learned from.
- Share the problems you are having in your own parallel learning of e.g. other foreign language
- Encourage all to respect everyone's point of view
- Early sessions are crucial...a relaxed, secure non-judgemental atmosphere is important
- Use "Where am I as a teacher?" file available in the SIG group archives as a basis for discussion and journal exchanges later on.

A personal observation

As trainers, we might discuss with teachers the idea of their using more pair and group work in their classes. The teachers might say the noise level will go up, and they might lose control of their class. Students will make language errors. Teachers may feel they are not really doing their job properly.

I see certain parallels here with our SIG discussion. The starter question asked how we can ensure that the experiences, ideas and opinions of our Ps are brought out and built on. We were soon into a discussion about losing control (psychologically) and not doing the job we are paid to do. We seem to share some of the same fears as teachers we work with.

Tessa Woodward (Founder of the IATEFL SIG TT/TED)

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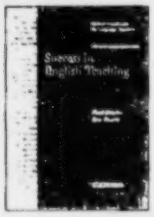

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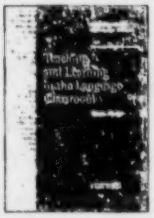

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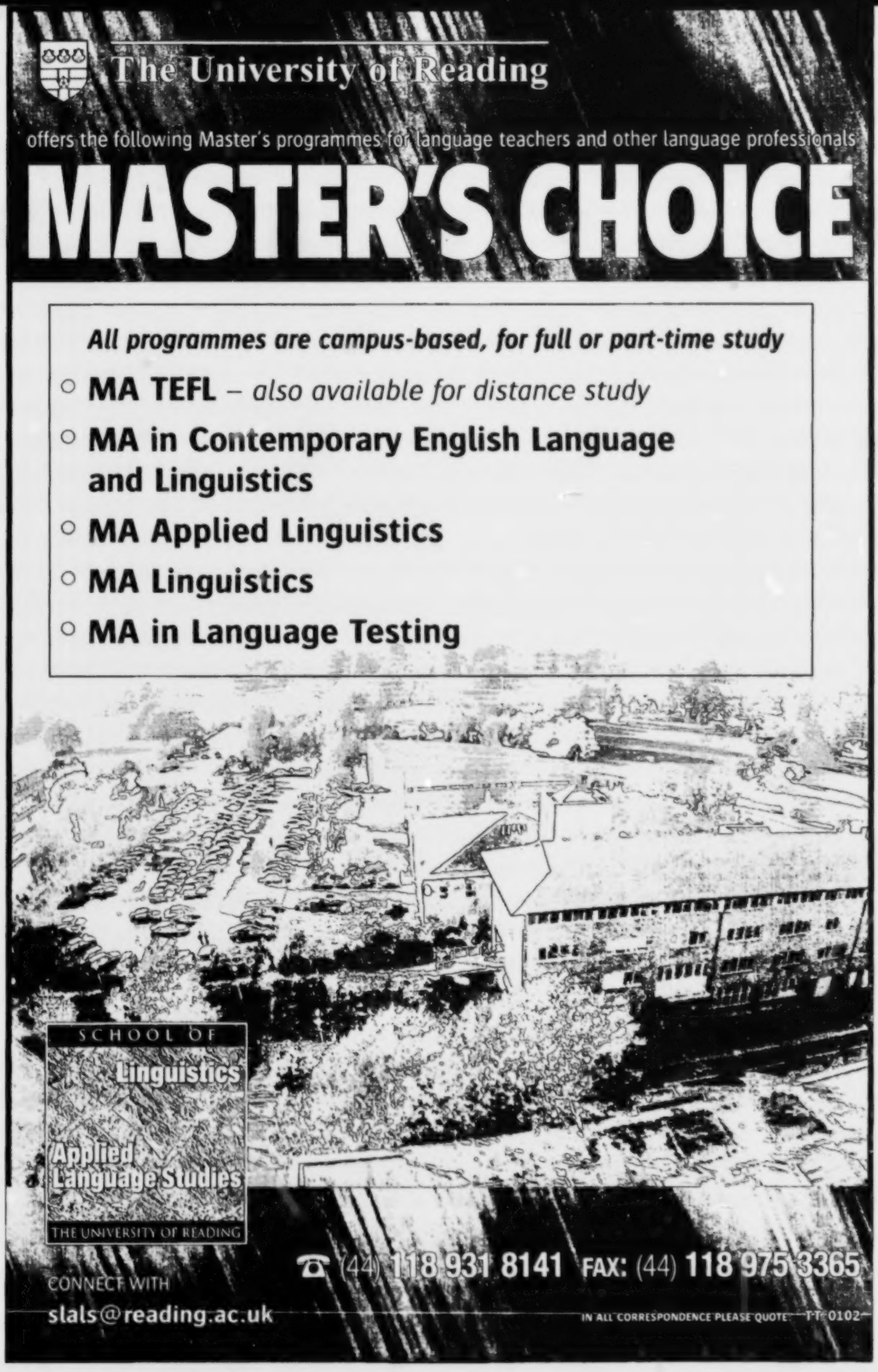
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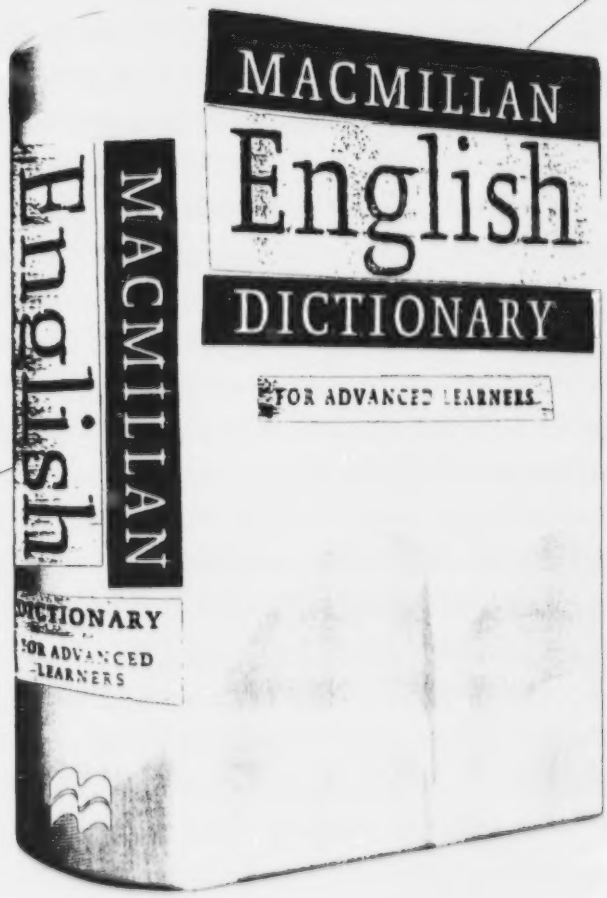

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- Robert Dilts interviewed! 19

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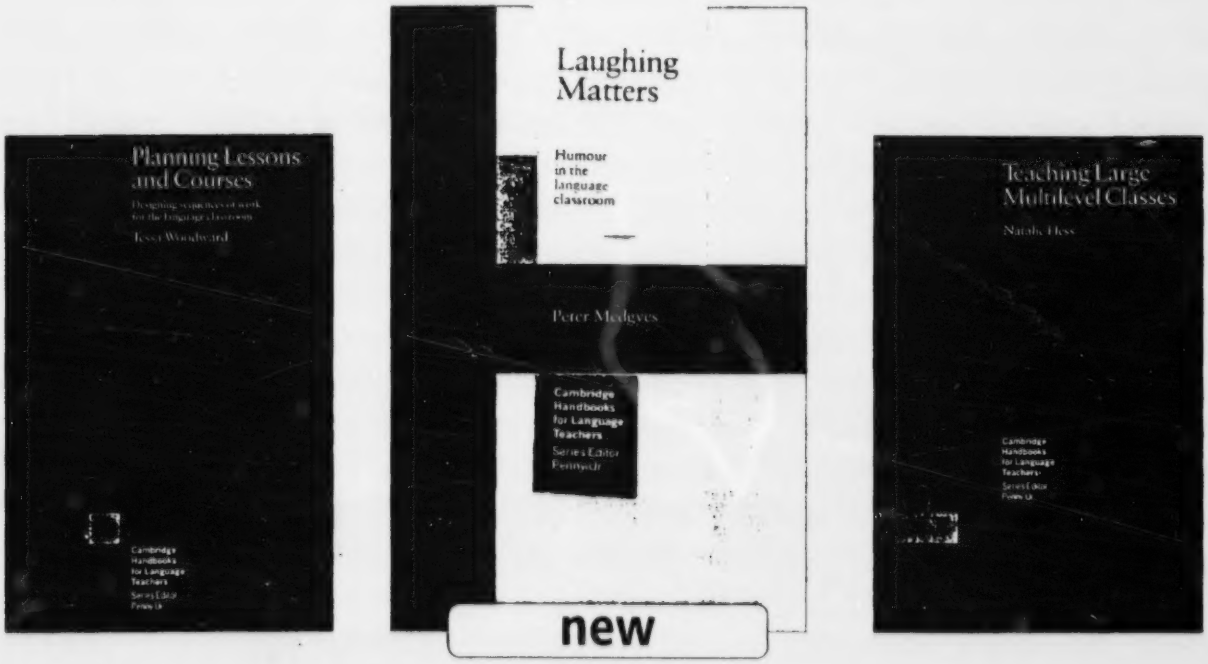

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The Teacher Trainer is a practical journal for those involved in modern language, especially TESOL, teacher training. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in the staff room, or a Director of studies with an office of your own, whether you are a mentor or a course tutor on an exam course, an inspector going out to schools or a teacher educator at a university, this journal is for you. Our aim is to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to put fellow professionals in touch with each other and to give all those involved in training, mentoring and educating teachers a feeling of how trainers in other fields operate, as well as building up a pool of experience within our own field.

The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. articles, letters, comments, quotations, interviews, cartoons, spoofs. If the idea is good and useful to trainers, we'll print it no matter what voice you choose to express it in.

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Editorial

Welcome to the summer issue of Volume Sixteen!

In the autumn of 2001, I was lucky enough to attend the Japan Association of Language Teachers (JALT) Pan Asian conference in Kyushu, Japan. There were participants from Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, Australia, Vietnam and many other places. One forum sponsored by the Special Interest Group for Teacher Educators was called "Developing structures for teacher support" and it was there that I met four of the contributors to this issue: Miriam Black (P3), Nobuyuki Takaki (P5), Naoko Aoki (P10) and Nguyen Thi Hoai An (P12). All contributed to the topic in their various ways and all have written their thoughts up for this issue. So our twin themes this issue are "Ways of supporting teachers in their development " and "What is happening in teacher education in Asia?". The "Have you read...? column offers more on the first theme since the book chosen is "Advising and supporting teachers " by Mick Randall and Barbara Thornton.

A topical subject these days is training primary school teachers of English. Pam Aboshiha (P13) explains how she mirrors five principles underlying the teaching of English to young learners in the two week courses for teachers that she runs.
Readers have asked us to have something on "e-matters" regularly. So, in the last issue we listed web sites of interest to teacher trainers. This time Huw Jarvis (P15) helps us to gain perspective on the many offerings on the internet.

Those who have had the good fortune to study NLP with Robert Dilts often mention his integrity, enthousiasm and sincere desire to meet participant needs. This was certainly my experience too when I studied with him this year. I later interviewed him (P19) about the "Logical levels framework" which has cropped up in this journal before (See David Bowker's article in Volume 12 Number 1.)

So I wish you happy reading and a great summer. Please keep the names and addresses of your trainer friends, the articles, the adverts and subscriptions rolling in. After all we can't grow without you!

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Building Structures of Support for Teachers

by Miriam T. Black, Japan

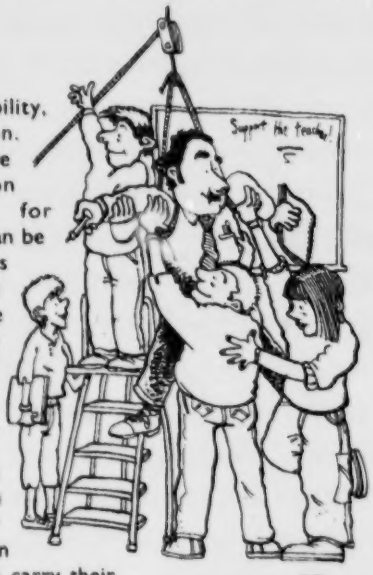
Structures of support for teachers and teacher trainers appear in a multitude of forms with each functioning differently to address specific issues in teaching contexts. One such support structure in Japan is the Teacher Education Special Interest Group (TE SIG) of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) organization. For the past year, as Coordinator of the TE SIG, it has been a rewarding experience for me to help establish programs with the other members and officers—only a handful of whom I have actually met face to face. One of my main tasks this year was to organize and moderate an international panel of speakers in the TE SIG-sponsored Forum at the combined third Pan-Asian Conference series event (PAC3) and JALT2001 Conference held last November in Kitakyushu, Japan.

The theme chosen for this forum was, "Developing Structures for Teacher Support." This was selected to address the often-expressed concerns of our members that they have the desire but not enough time to engage in teacher development activities. In addition, even though they want to collaborate with other teachers, they are unsure how to initiate action. The idea behind the forum was to demonstrate how teachers in a variety of settings, including Japan, have found creative ways to support each other. We hoped to stimulate the audience to share their ideas and experiences, too. The speakers included Nguyen thi Hoai An, Tessa Woodward, Naoko Aoki, Jessica Hsin-Hwa Chen, and Nobuyuki Takaki. The following is the overview that was presented to introduce the topic and presenters, as well as suggestions for overcoming problems that hinder cooperative development.

Teachers who participate in collaborative projects and have the support of a wider community often have greater professional satisfaction and confidence in their teaching. Research suggests that such teachers also feel enriched in their teaching, and this occurs for a variety of reasons. Julian Edge (1992) links the concept of self-development with that of teacher development. Both occur on two levels. In self-development, people gain understanding of what is happening in their lives and analyze this new information. On a second level, those around us add insights and raise new questions and areas for exploration.

In the same way, teachers themselves initiate action in regard to understanding what is happening in their classrooms, through both systematic and also less formal means. Colleagues, students, and others can add perspective and raise new queries and topics for further investigation. Accordingly, Julian Edge claims that self-development, and ultimately teacher development, *needs the input of other people* to move forward.

In the professional development area of conducting research, collaboration has many advantages. Michael Wallace (1998) writes that conducting collaborative action research has the following benefits: 1) depth and coverage, 2) validity and reliability, and 3) motivation. When more people are involved in an action research project, for instance, more data can be gathered and issues explored from different angles. The results may also be more valid, as they withstand the scrutiny of a larger group. Furthermore, when working as part of a team, there is an underlying "peer pressure" which can motivate members to carry their projects through to a satisfactory conclusion.



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Despite these benefits, however, the reality is that collaboration does not occur as often as it could, even at the basic level of the sharing of ideas and resources. The reasons for this are many and can be both organizational and personal. Causes can include a history (or culture) of professional isolation, pressure from the workplace, lack of recognition or reward from administrators for professional development, jealousy in the workplace, professional insecurity, different status between members of the group, and the lack of knowledge of how to embark on such projects. In addition, less experienced teachers may already be overwhelmed with work and see collaboration as an added burden. Or they may need more guidance throughout all stages of the project.

Furthermore, the demands of this kind of collaborative relationship may not be fully understood by all the group members. According to Edge, in this kind of working relationship, a distinct *style* of work must be developed that entails "new rules for speaking, listening, and responding in order to cooperate in a disciplined way" (1992, p. 4). Enforcing these rules can also be problematic, as the enforcer may, in exercising his or her power, be going against entrenched roles of group members or the established hierarchy.

Edge and Wallace have also provided some suggestions for overcoming obstacles. Julian Edge devotes his book, *Cooperative Development* (1992), to the establishment of the new rules needed for interacting in a collaborative environment. Wallace (1998, p. 210) proposes that setting ground rules before embarking on a collaborative project is key. He suggests the following questions to stimulate a discussion of such ground rules:

- What are we trying to do?
- Why are we doing this? (Do we share the same motivation, or do we have different motivations?)

continued

- How are we going to do it? (Who does what and when?)
- How much time are we each prepared to spend on this?
- How often do we meet, where and when?
- What is the end product going to be? (A talk or article, or simply a shared experience?)

Another approach to overcoming these problems has been suggested by Allen, et al (2000) in light of their experience in developing a research community in a collage in Japan. They suggest creating a cooperative development *environment* that helps train critical teachers who are engaged in research. They suggest a multilevel collaboration – teacher development activities performed individually and as a group, information-sharing, a clear division of responsibilities, and reseach projects that arise from the teachers' own classrooms, so that participants can feel a direct impact of their research on their teaching. Here are some activities they propose: a) regular meetings focused specifically on research, b) a goal-setting exercise at the beginning of the year to define research questions, c) establishing clear deadlines for research and checking that these are followed, d) keeping a teaching journal, e) the triangulation of data, f) setting external goals (e.g. conference presentations and publications), g) group editing of texts, and h) circulating information about conferences, publications and research (Allen, et al, 2000, p. 15).

Additional strategies for overcoming elements that hinder collaborative development were presented in the Forum speakers' talks and arose from the discussion that followed. In addressing the issue of lack of time, it seemed to be less of an issue in teacher development groups which had been functioning for a longer period of time, as well as in groups which were more "member-led" (i.e. autonomous in defining and implementing the program) rather than "expert-led." In such groups, members had integrated the meeting time into their schedules, felt they were getting something worthwhile from the programs, and had more of a stake in the successful outcome of the program. However, it seemed that teacher insecurity in most cases was so high that it had taken several years before teachers could even make a short presentation to the group, let alone feel comfortable taking charge of the program in this way.

In addressing the problem of teacher isolation, several suggestions were raised. The first was to start small. Working with one other person on some level, addressing professional issues on a somewhat regular basis, is a valid starting place. The Internet and email also can be a means of communicating and sharing ideas with old or new colleagues in the field. Connecting with others through professional organizations such as the TE SIG and their related electronic resources is an example of this.

Finally, when deciding on whom to approach as a potential partner in collaboration, it was suggested to choose first those with whom one already has established a comfortable working relationship, and one with whom there already exists an atmosphere of mutual respect. From the Forum presentations, it was made clear once again that there are very dedicated teachers in all contexts all over the world, and it is only a matter of finding ways to seek them out for help in collaboration.

In conclusion, if one believes that teacher development does indeed need the input of others, it is essential that this Forum's discussion continue. Educators must persist in searching for unique ways to collaborate and be creative in adapting others' successful methods to their own professional contexts.

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Edge, J. (1992). Cooperative development. Essex: Longman. Wallace, M. (1998). Action research for language teachers. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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PIGATE: Affecting EFL Teacher Education Change from the Grassroots Level in Japan

by Nobuyuki Takaki, Kumamoto University, Japan

Abstract

In Japan bottom-up teacher development is difficult to initiate because of traditional hierarchical structures, which have also inhibited collaborative teacher learning (Okada, 1996). Historically, self-help grassroots development organizations among in-service teachers have never been quite successful in Japan (Natsuhara, 2000). However, in PIGATE, a Japanese grassroots English teacher education program, participating teachers, students and teacher educators, without government funding or support, have collaboratively engaged in monthly professional development sessions and published newsletters and journals since 1993. This article reports on PIGATE in terms of its origin, objectives, evolution, challenges, and future proposals. It also describes the manner in which this organization has affected a group of Japanese teachers of English, who together with other Japanese teachers have the potential to be one of the greatest forces of change in teacher education in Japan.

Background

Cultural/Contextual Dilemma

Freeman (1996) indicates that teacher education has long been dominated by tradition, convention and intuition Moreover, Kanatani (1995) states that research on teachers in Japan is almost taboo. Though this may be too strong a statement, certainly the cultural traditions surrounding teachers in Japan make research on teaching difficult at best. The idea is deeply rooted in Japanese culture that the teacher deserves respect and gratitude. Thus, teachers are rarely challenged or criticized, especially in public. Although White (1987) indicates a recent shift in this attitude, teaching at primary and secondary schools still remains a relatively respected and well-paid profession.

Paradoxically, the high public esteem given to teachers has also caused a vacuum in teacher development (Fukuda, 1992). Because of the high status given them, teachers are often insecure about discussing problems arising from their classrooms, especially ones felt to reveal their weaknesses. Consequently, in-service teacher development has remained unimproved to a large extent, leaving teachers unaccountable for what goes on in their

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classrooms (Richards and Lockhart, 1994). I believe that this factor has prevented teachers from achieving the highest level of professional development possible.

Isolationism and Lack of Collaboration

There exists in Japan a teacher culture symbolized by a traditionally prevalent teacher attitude of professional isolation and nonintervention (Mori and Akita, 2000). Thus, little friendly sharing or collaborative development among teachers is found, and unless they are under external pressure from their school's administration, they rarely discuss their teaching problems with anyone. According to Takaki and Laskowski (1998), in a study of Japanese junior high school English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, 36 percent report they keep their problems to themselves when they are faced with challenges in teaching.
Over the years there have been many studies that demonstrate the positive results of collaboration as illustrated in Fullan (1993), and Knezevic and Scholl (1996, p. 79):

"Collaboration – shared responsibility inside and outside the classroom – gives teachers an opportunity for heightened reflection. The need to synchronize teaching acts requires team teachers to negotiate and discuss their thoughts, values, and actions in ways that solo teachers do not encounter."

Thus, if collaboration could exist even on casual terms, and especially with expert teacher trainer support, teachers in Japan would have the opportunity to improve themselves professionally.

Boards of Education and the Education Centers: Alienated from Teachers

This tendency toward professional isolation, is not only restricted to classroom practitioners. Boards of education and governmental education centers, structures designed to be officially responsible for teachers' development are in reality alienated from each other and teachers (S. Suetsugu, personal communication, September 15, 2001). Consequently, a gap exists between official teacher trainers and teachers at events such as institution-sponsored training seminars. Often, the result is that at these seminars, consultants talk about theories or trends in teaching which do not match the classroom realities of the teachers.

Teachers: Overloaded and Lost

Teachers in Japan state that a lack of connection with other teachers and teacher trainers often exists because of their extensive and required participation in daily school activities, i.e., student guidance, school sports/culture club advising, PTA activities, etc. (Takaki, 1996). According to the latest survey by Sakurada (2001), junior high school teachers in Japan work 48.9 hours per week on average, and the average time they leave school for home is 6:54 p.m. In addition, 78% say they frequently work and supervise activities at school in holidays, and 90% say they frequently do their school work at home as well.

In addition, Fukuzawa (1996, pp. 295-296) explains:
"Japanese education focuses on the development of the whole person. The curriculum includes a wide variety of non-academic activities – music, art, sports, field trips, clubs, ceremonies, homeroom time – designed to enhance the full development of the ("whole") person. In fact, the very definition of teaching encompasses not only transmission of knowledge but counseling, guidance and discipline – tasks which in the United States are either viewed as parental or beyond the scope of teachers who are not counseling specialists."

The "whole person" approach has placed quite a burden on teachers especially now that the social trend is toward the lessening responsibility of educating children at home and in the larger community in general (Mori and Akita, 2000). In addition, Japanese teachers do not receive extra compensation for these activities. The comment below from a teacher demonstrates that teaching English effectively, in reality, is not necessarily Japanese EFL teachers' top priority (Takaki and Laskowski, 1998):

"I wish English teaching could be my first priority, but I'm busy meeting students about discipline, and if they have a problem I have to go to their houses. Also now I am a school club activity baseball advisor. Often I don't get home until 7:30. I have to do this six days a week, and on Saturday 2 pm to 7 pm." (male, junior high school teacher with 8 years of experience)

Although both teacher training and development are necessary for professional development, many teachers, in reality, tend to think their formal pre-service training is adequate to become and remain a professional (Head and Taylor, 1977). Thus, teachers generally learn through classroom experience and intuition, not by being involved on a daily basis in teacher development (Knezevic and Scholl, 1996). Consequently, for many reasons, in Japan assiduous collaborative in-service teacher development is, either consciously or unconsciously, ignored.

This does not necessarily mean that in-service programs are nonexistent in Japan. On the contrary, such programs can be found everywhere. Practically speaking, however, it is not easy for many teachers, due to their hectic schedules, to participate in them, except for the government-sponsored seminars which they are required to attend. Moreover, innovative ideas which participants are introduced to in such workshops quite are often not implemented in the classroom, much less discussed among colleagues in a professional forum (Richards and Lockhart, 1994).

One Solution: Grassroots Activism as an Alternative Method for Change

Fullan (1993, p. 105) claims that traditional teacher education programs leave much room for improvement:
"The real problem is that there is not the sense of practical urgency and clarity of action in the 90s to do something about teacher education. Teacher education still has the honor of being simultaneously the worst problem and the best solution in education. We need desperately to size up the problem, and see what can be done to make the career-long continuum of teacher learning a reality."

This trenchant observation can be readily applied to the Japanese teacher's situation as the need for improving teacher education has been repeatedly voiced in many studies (Tsubura, 1991).

An even more serious problem in Japan is that "*kenshu-ken*" or the teachers' right to improve themselves as educational servants (as guaranteed in the Special Law Concerning Public Servants in Education), has been infringed upon. This is due to their extensive required participation in extra-curricular activities, and due to administerial control over teacher development which tends to suppress independent educational research. Horio (1987, p. 250) criticizes the situation citing a typical Ministry of Education line of reasoning:

"While teachers in universities carry out research and convey the findings to their students, the principal calling of primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary teachers is simply to teach."

Yet, even in this unsupportive context, teachers themselves still have the potential to be the greatest force of change in teacher education. Change is both possible and very necessary, and for this to happen teachers must sense the urgency and initiate action. Fullan (1993) also emphasizes that such systems do not change when people wait for others to correct the problem. All the points above have contributed to the creation of a new kind of EFL teacher education program: a grassroots organization.

PIGATE's Creation: Bottom-up Activism Foundation

PIGATE, whimsically denoting a group of learner-teachers (piglets) working together at the gate leading to the world of professional teachers of EFL, started its activities in February, 1993. PIGATE was driven by the needs of teachers. In a desperate bottom-up struggle, junior college graduates, having become EFL teachers, frequently were coming back to me for advice on issues which arose from their being teachers with only limited pre-service and in-service training. Enlightened and inspired through such interactions, a support organization for them and the teacher educator was established. Thus, it was decided that every second Saturday of the month these former students would regularly meet on campus to discuss their questions. By word of mouth, information about PIGATE spread to other EFL teachers in the prefecture, and the participants became more diverse, representing various age groups and stages of professional development (see Appendix A).

Organization and Programs

The central activity of PIGATE is a four-hour monthly session. One exception is in August when a three-day intensive session for language skills building is offered. Activities for the sessions are based on a 2-year syllabus developed by a steering committee of volunteers from the membership in collaboration with several university EFL teacher educators. The monthly and August sessions are summarized in a monthly newsletter (of approximately 40 pages) which is edited and distributed to every member. There have been 99 issues published as of January, 2002. In addition, 8 annual journals to which members have contributed their articles and reports have been published. A local college offers the meeting site gratis, and members pay minimal yearly fees — the only source of funds. The fees are set on a sliding scale, depending on the member's circumstances. No financial assistance is received from the central and/or local governments in order to eliminate governmental control and restrictions. Thus, PIGATE is run on a voluntary and self-governed basis.

Main Objectives

The following four objectives, drafted by the steering committee and chosen jointly by participating teachers and teacher educators, have been recognized among the members in implementing teacher learning activities. We aim to:

- raise our awareness as EFL practitioners,
- make our implicit theories (underlying thoughts behind teaching) explicit,
- develop and improve our practical skills in teaching EFL,
- improve our communicative competence in EFL.

Learning Cycles

The following professional development syllabus with different focuses has been prepared and followed during roughly each two-year period since PIGATE's establishment:

1993-1995

The first two years were devoted to developing the novice teachers' practical and survival teaching skills, for example how to effectively use a chalkboard and OHP, following Goken (1983), a set consisting of a guidebook and videotapes.

1995-1997

The next two years focused on studying EFL pedagogy, the theme being "learning teaching" taken from Scrivener's (1994) *Learning Teaching*, which was the main textbook. The participants studied fundamental concepts in teaching EFL which had been previously introduced to them at college, and discussed their decision-making processes and choices in teaching, thus moving into a less observable, and often closed or hidden area in their teaching.

1997-1999

This was followed by another two years' work on teachers' self-analysis of the practices and beliefs which are rooted consciously or unconsciously in their thinking as teachers. For this purpose, teachers studied and discussed topics in Richards and Lockhart (1994) *Reflective Teaching in Second Language Classrooms*. In addition, the participants' journals, lesson reports, videotapes of classes, observation sheets, etc. were used for research and reflection.

1999-2000

In the seventh year, the participants focused on collaborative action research and were divided into five small special interest groups, each with a different focus. These groups then published the results of their work in PIGATE (2000), and later presented at a Japan Association for Language Teaching (JALT) session in April, 2001.

2000-2001

During this year the members returned to the topic of teaching techniques as studied in the very first two-year syllabus. However, the purpose was now to revisit "well-known" techniques (for experienced teachers) and survival skills (for pre-service and novice teachers) to learn how continues

better to use them in implementing Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) prescribed and pushed by the Japanese Ministry of Education. This time incorporated in each session were participants' demonstrations and reflections on their own videotaped classes, focusing on specific teaching skills.

Positive Affects and Change in Teachers Unwinding Teacher Learning

Isolated within a teaching culture that does not openly discuss teaching, PIGATE has provided a new forum for teachers to discuss their inner thoughts. The first and the most important achievement of PIGATE, therefore, has been that teachers have learned to discuss their worries and problems in public, unwinding their experiences and learning, *as teachers and as people*, as the following comment demonstrates:

"PIGATE for me is where I can freely discuss my problems as a teacher. I never can, and perhaps never will under the present circumstances, do that at my school. I come to PIGATE to get the guts to survive as a teacher."
(female, junior high school teacher with 8 years of experience)

Members' Professional Contributions

The second achievement is in the process and change that PIGATE has undergone since its establishment; PIGATE has become a place from which teachers can take not only ideas, but also professionally contribute by giving presentations and writing for newsletters and journals. It has gone from being instructor-led to participant-led; the advisor's role is no longer that of a controller or a master teacher as in the "Craft Model" by Wallace (1993, p. 6), but rather a supervising facilitator.

In taking more control of their own development, members have gradually learned to discuss why they do what they do in their classrooms. They have become practitioner-researchers, not just humble consumers of new theories and techniques. Finally, they have learned the joy of conducting collaborative action research projects (see Learning Cycle: 1999-2000) as explained in the following comment:

"I learned that there's no failure in conducting action research. The fact that I'm involved and learning through the process are important. But the best part was that I got to know different teachers with different ideas who were trying to share worries and concerns." (male, senior high school teacher with 5 years of experience)

Learning Collaboratively: Pre-service Teachers and In-service Teachers

The third achievement is an integration of pre-service and in-service teacher education. The best example of this is that during the process of action research, each group's members observed each other's classes and met on a voluntary and daily basis for discussion. Consequently, it has now become common for PIGATE members to assist and learn from each other outside of the regular sessions as well. Moreover, student members have benefited, because they can gain more information for their personal investigations into the nature of teaching, especially for their senior theses by regularly observing the in-service teachers' classes. This is described in the following comment:

"It was great that many PIGATE teachers helped me with my senior thesis by answering my questionnaire, and also by allowing me to observe their classes regularly. It was also thrilling to have worked with them under the action research project." (female, undergraduate student)

Student-teachers' class observation opportunities in Japan are normally provided only during their formal two to three-week practice teaching session at local schools. No doubt this kind of collaboration and exchange of information should be experienced more frequently if there is to be lasting change in English education in Japan. Thus, the key to learning how to teach is, as experienced by these groups, authentic teacher development rooted in classroom realities.

Continuing Challenges Scheduling and Lack of Common Free Time

There have been challenges in both managing and directing PIGATE. The first is the difficulty for both in-service and pre-service teachers to negotiate a common free time to attend sessions. However, those who have regularly participated in monthly and summer sessions have claimed that their regular attendance is due to the fact that attending has been integrated into their lives as EFL teachers. Additionally, even those who do not attend PIGATE sessions regularly are still able to maintain contact through newsletters and PIGATE's website.

Lack of Diversity of Members

Considering the large number of EFL teachers in the prefecture (1,160 as of April, 2001) PIGATE members comprise no more than a handful, often with limited teaching experience. The majority of the members are junior high school teachers with less than ten years of experience, students, or pre-service teachers. A more diverse mix of teachers from various schools would be beneficial, as the Japanese Ministry of Education has also recently advocated extensive cooperation among primary, secondary and tertiary schools (Ohshita, 2000).

Balancing the Move toward Autonomy and the Need for Professional Guidance

Another concern is how PIGATE can continue growing and moving toward a more autonomous structure, a concern raised in the following comment:

"I feel some participants are too passive in each session: waiting to be told to do something and depending far too much on experienced teachers and teacher educators. They should learn to try to contribute in one way or another". (female, junior high school teacher with 10 years of experience)

At the beginning it was inevitable that I had to play a larger role in managing, teaching and giving guidance, but gradually while accumulating learning experiences, the members have learned to take care of themselves. Both students and teachers have begun to voice what they want to accomplish, as evidenced by the various syllabi and members' self-guided sessions during the director's one year absence due to his participation in a professor exchange program (1999-2000).

Although teachers have become more autonomous, according to some members, it is sometimes necessary that they also receive a "push," i.e., specific guidance and prescriptions, in order for them to change ineffective routines or address problems. For example, many members say they come to PIGATE mainly because EFL specialists' advice and feedback are available. This is expressed in the following comment:

"I wouldn't come to PIGATE regularly if no specialists' feedback were available. In most self-help teacher seminars no expert contribution is available. Therefore we can end up complaining about various things and licking each other's wounds. On the other hand, most of us can't afford professional development workshops frequently given in big cities." (female, junior high school teacher with 10 years of experience)

Although it is important for a self-help teacher education group to be autonomous, it is necessary that there is contact with the specialist community. Therefore, it is essential that university teacher educators donate their time to assist pre- and in-service teachers in their professional development on a grassroots level as well.

Summary and Proposal
The Necessity of Grassroots Teacher Development

As this study has shown, grassroots teacher development is vital in places such as Japan where the hierarchical teacher education system is inadequate in helping teachers to develop professionally. In fact, in a pilot survey conducted by Takaki (1996) of 60 junior high school teachers who had not known about PIGATE, more than 80% of the respondents answered they would support and participate in an organization like PIGATE. Another pilot survey conducted in 2001, sampling views of PIGATE participants, showed that the majority of respondents are positive about PIGATE, and say it has had a positive influence on their professional development as EFL teachers or as teachers-to-be.

This suggests that practicing teachers themselves, on a grassroots level, must not wait for the government, the board of education or other formal institutions to take the lead in in-service and pre-service teacher education reform. The teachers themselves must act as a group to develop grassroots organizations. Without grassroots activism no on-going teacher development can realistically be successful in Japan. Thus, it is PIGATE's desire that a more active network of grassroots organizations, integrating pre-service/in-service teachers and teacher educators, will develop.

Consequently, based on PIGATE's experience, the following proposal is put forth for the reform of teacher development and programs in Japan.

Proposal: Local Universities Urged to Start Follow-up Programs in Collaboration with Grassroots Activism

The key to success of such a grassroots organization is the willing participation of university teacher educators working with a group of teachers who want and demand such an organization. Furthermore, no hesitation should be made in exploiting an already available network: the local university. Each local university which produces EFL teachers has the potential to start, without much difficulty, such follow-up seminars or workshops for the graduate-teachers, and gradually get them organized together with the EFL students as a teacher development group. It also appears that there would be even more chance of success if the teachers themselves take the initiative to set up the organization.

The aim is that with the experience of PIGATE in mind, this study and the above proposal will further encourage the development of grassroots teacher education in Japan and other regions of the world.

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An alternative way for teachers to develop

by Naoko Aoki, Japan

My stance on action research

What I'll do in this article is play devil's advocate. My argument goes like this. Action research seems to be a fad in second language teacher education. The general atmosphere is that if you are a professional, you should constantly try to improve your practice and if you want to improve your practice, you should engage in action research. The implication is that those who do not engage in action research are not professionals at all or are inferior ones. But is this true? Does nothing else stimulate teacher development? Of course there are other ways. Michael Wallace (1998: 5) says this in his introduction to action research:

"One informal but very effective strategy is discussions with our colleagues on classroom experiences or problems relating to specific students. This kind of 'talking shop' can have a whole range of useful functions: accessing useful background information, articulating possible solutions to everyday classroom problems, improving self-esteem, relieving tension, and so on."

The personal, practical knowledge of teachers

Wallace's observation sounds very attractive. I shall expand on it a bit further. Every teacher has personal practical knowledge of teaching (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990). This knowledge develops as they teach, in many cases without formally collecting any data as you do in action research. The assumption that teachers' knowledge does not develop without formally collecting data or that the knowledge thus developed is inferior to the one based on action research is disempowering because it fails to recognize the authority of experience (Munby & Russell, 1984) in teachers' knowledge. Teachers' personal practical knowledge, in whatever way it has been developed, should be respected.

Many teachers are simply too busy to carry out even small scale action research following a procedure suggested in books like Wallace's. They may be teaching an enormous number of hours a week part-time at several different schools scattered all over a city. Or they may have to do a lot of administrative work on top of teaching. Or they may be primary care-givers at home. We should not make teacher development into a commodity which only privileged teachers can afford. I am not saying, though, that teacher educators do not have to do anything but let teachers' knowledge develop as it will. What I'm saying is that any effort to support teacher development must take the reality of teachers' work and

life context into consideration. A 'talking shop' with colleagues, perhaps once a month in the evening or on weekend, is less demanding and time-consuming than action research.

Anecdotes and good conversations

Some may present a counter-argument that talks at such teachers' gatherings tend to be anecdotal and that teachers just keep groaning about whatever is on their minds. I agree that there must be a structure and focus in a talk in order for it to be constructive. Christopher Clark (2001) observes seven qualities in good teacher conversations: Good conversation:

- demands good content;
- resists the bounds of definition;
- is voluntary;
- happens on common ground;
- requires safety, trust, and care;
- develops;
- has a future.

I don't think, however, that there is anything wrong with anecdotes. Bruner (1986:11) claims that there are two modes of thought, paradigmatic and narrative. He goes on to say that "efforts to reduce one mode to the other or to ignore one at the expense of the other inevitably fail to capture the rich diversity of thought".

Teachers' knowledge is mostly narrative embedded in context (Carter, 1993). Talking about one's experience in the form of narrative is more in accord with the nature of teachers' knowledge than paradigmatic description or analysis. A good anecdote has a lot to offer.

Action research is an alternative to the conventional view that research should be objective, neutral and generalisable, and that its outcome should be able to predict and control future events. Proponents of action research are not likely to disagree to this statement, but they tend to take an ambivalent position in terms of what counts as knowledge worth disseminating. The procedure they often recommend for data collection, analysis and presentation is very much paradigmatic: itemizing, classifying, counting, and so on. I doubt if it captures the heuristic and intuitive nature of teachers' decision making processes very well.

Teaching is an emotional activity

Another aspect, which conversations seem to be better at than action research is, is dealing with emotions. Teaching is very much an emotional activity. Our sense of self is often shaken up by learners' responses. We also have to come to terms with the culture of the institution we work in, It is not always compatible with our own values and beliefs. Who hasn't cried or got depressed or been infuriated because of something that happened at work? The longer we stay in the profession, the better we may become at holding in our emotions, but teaching still sometimes hurts. Teacher development, or any kind of development for that matter, cannot be expected to take place unless negative emotions are recognized and accepted. Conversations among teachers have a potential for "improving self-esteem" and "relieving tension" as Wallace (1998) points out. Action research, particularly when it is done collaboratively, may create a chance for teachers to vent their frustration, self-doubt, shock and so on, but the emotional aspect of teaching seldom becomes the topic of research itself or is included in the final report. This is unfortunate because it maintains the status of emotion as something every teacher experiences but wouldn't dare to talk about in public. To conclude, I shall quote a comment from a student on her experience of participating in a teacher conversation group which was organized as a course in a Japanese as a second language teacher education programme. In this course student teachers wrote a story of their experience and we discussed themes that were found in each story (rather than the story itself) so that we should not unwittingly hurt the author. This student says:

"Reading someone else's narrative and thinking which of its elements overlapped or didn't overlap with my experience was a very good opportunity for reflection. I wasn't very articulate in the discussion, but I was always thinking. As I wrote my reflection later, I felt as if I was writing my own narrative on the same theme."

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MEET A COLLEAGUE FROM VIETNAM

Vietnam is a small country in South East Asia with a long history of fighting for its independence. A thousand years of Chinese, then a hundred years of French domination proved that the people were determined to keep their own culture. The last war ended in 1975 and Vietnam is now looking forward to a better future.

TW. I know your full name is NGUYEN THI HOAI AN but what can I call you as a colleague and new friend?
NTHA. An!

TW. OK, How did you become a teacher trainer, An?
An. After graduating in 1976, I taught English in a small town in the highlands for 10 years. During that time, I was completely cut off from the world. I didn't get any books, magazines or materials for teaching in English at all. Other teachers in Vietnam (VN) were in the same situation and we couldn't help each other. For 10 years, I read the same novel "Gone with the Wind" again and again every year as it was all I had and I really liked it. But I always resented that I spent the best years of my life learning nothing for my career. Then things became better and better for my country but when I was about 40, I knew I no longer had any opportunity for a scholarship to go abroad for my further study as the government sets an age limit for getting a scholarship. I started to think of doing all I could to help younger teachers who still had a better chance to help VN students. That was how I began as a trainer, unofficially.

TW. So what sort of projects have you been involved in?
An. Well, in brief CV style I could say....I have been a teacher for 25 years, teaching junior and senior high school students. In 1994, I started teaching at the University of Education in Ho Chi Minh City as a free lance teacher. Since then, I've worked with students at some universities to train them to be English teachers. As a Regional Team Leader (Speaking component) for University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), I also train teachers to become UCLES Oral Examiners in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and the Philippines.

TW. What's your setting now?
An. Recently, I've worked as DOS at SEAMEO Vietnam whose mission is to promote education, science and culture through cooperation in the region. I've got more opportunity to work with teachers to help with their professional development, both Vietnamese and expatriates. The English Department at SEAMEO has provided fairly good courses to the public. All the Vietnamese teachers were trained to be teachers while several of the native speakers of English were not. As a new DOS, I need to find out what these native speakers want to do to improve their teaching skills but at the same time, I must be careful so that it will not offend them. Providing some mentoring is essential. Of course the VN teachers, including me, need to enhance our teaching to meet the needs of the students.

TW. What is special about working in Vietnam?
An. In big cities, like Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) or the capital, Hanoi, English teachers have access to information about the progress made in ELT. However, in small towns and remote places, there are almost no facilities. A cassette player may be considered a 'luxury' in several places. There aren't enough textbooks for students, let alone reference books for teachers, so a new dictionary is definitely out of reach. Teachers in these places could never think of spending about half of their monthly salary to buy an up to date dictionary. In many areas, there aren't enough schools and furniture and it is not uncommon for teachers to have to go to each house to persuade parents to let their children go to school because these families are so poor that they need their children to help earn their daily living. In the Mekong Delta, which is flooded several months every year, students may have to catch fish in their schoolyard for their daily food. Education, in general, has to face a lot of difficulties in these areas and of course teaching English can't be developed there.

TW. What do you enjoy about your job?
An. I'm happy to see several teachers, both students and colleagues, come to me for advice and support. And they don't just come because they want to talk with me about their teaching. It's also about their lives with their personal issues and joy. It shows that they trust me and their trust gives me the strength and confidence I need. When I feel disappointed or sad, I think about those who are willing share a part of their lives with me. It does not mean I do not need to ask for their opinions. I have found them quite useful in many cases.

TW. What do you need from the groups of teachers you work with?
An. Their trust and cooperation.

TW. Is there any area you feel a bit guilty not knowing more about?
An. Well, there are so many things I want to know more about, for example how to be a more effective organiser so that I can help more with teacher cooperation in Vietnam, especially in HCMC. Anyway, I don't think I feel guilty about not knowing things and I am willing to learn more. I consider myself luckier than many colleagues of mine as I've been abroad and met people who can teach me a lot.

TW. Are there any other questions you'd like to put to yourself and to other trainers who star in this column?
An. Yes! How can we work together more effectively and how can we help teachers in remote places? I'm thinking of teachers in small towns in my country, who write to me ' sometimes I need help but I don't know who to go to'. These teachers work hard to earn their living, to support their families and to help their students. I do feel 'guilty' when I can use some 'modern' facilities such as an OHP, while many of other teachers in VN still do not even have a new edition dictionary, let alone an OHP!
TW. Thanks An!

Making Mirrors in Primary Course Design

Pam Aboshiha, Canterbury Christ Church University College, UK

Background

In 1999 the Pädagogisches Institut des Bundes in Austria approached Canterbury Christ Church University College for the provision of a new development course for Primary teachers in the northern Austrian province of Linz.

These primary teachers were already teaching English to 8-10 year olds but a new Austrian government directive meant that they would soon have to begin teaching the language to 6-7 year olds. The government would fund most of the "re-training" but course participants would also have to part-fund the course.

The College had already run a number of successful summer courses for the teachers from the Linz province, although these had been aimed at teaching the older age group of children. The original programme had included work on various topic areas such as nature and festivals, art and handicraft, as well as language improvement sessions and input to help teachers with their classroom language.

This course had worked well and its popularity had been the reason the university college had been asked to implement the new training scheme. The new scheme would involve twenty teachers per course on a "roll-on, roll off" basis for at least two years. There were to be fourteen courses each academic year.

The challenge

The courses were only to be two weeks long with 42 contact hours and needed to introduce teachers to an integrated, cross-curricular approach to teaching the very young learners, rather than repeating the traditional discrete item method of teaching through, for example, grammar and vocabulary. These Linz teachers would now be required to integrate ten minute slots of English into all their classes for 6-7 year olds and it was felt that, as the approach required was different to their usually formal classes, the teachers would find it somewhat daunting.

The teachers

Our information about the teachers was that their ages ranged from about 22 to approximately 50 and that they would all have an advanced level of proficiency in English. As it turned out, their level was usually around intermediate, with some linguistically weaker and some stronger than this.

On such a short course, with a mixture of very experienced and relatively inexperienced teachers, the design challenge was to present both a core of practical ideas for the young learner curriculum, giving the teachers a bank of useful material to use at home, and improve the teachers' language skills so they might gain the confidence to develop further classroom ideas in English for themselves.

Furthermore, the course needed not only to provide an experiential approach at classroom level but also to reflect the principles of good primary practice in its overall design. The principles underlying the teaching of English to young learners have been discussed by Moon (2000) and Williams (1998) and in this article I shall look at how the mirroring of some of these principles was attempted. I shall conclude with what I feel has been achieved thus far in our work with these teachers who are beginning to introduce English to their youngest learners.

Trying to make the mirrors

Principle One: "Getting the Meaning"
The first important principle we wanted to work from was language development at discourse level. Very young learners do not appear to recognise language systems or learn a language by discrete item teaching. They make sense of messages carried in familiar contexts. If we wanted to mirror the way children instinctively interpret the sense of a situation, we needed to depart from discrete item language input ourselves. We needed to let the teachers learn to comprehend meaning from context and absorb whole "chunks of language".

Teaching discrete language items in language development sessions would only have reinforced the teachers' original language learning experiences, which had been almost exclusively grammar-based. This meant there was a tendency for them, quite naturally in the circumstances, to see language very much in terms of grammatical accuracy.

For these reasons, therefore, we designed our language sessions to encourage the teachers to work out meaning from audio, video and written texts about local culture

continued

and the British educational system. We also had texts and discussions about the daily lives of primary teachers and host families. We made it clear were not concerned with the correctness of their English but with their ability to convey meaning.

We made sure they were exposed to a wide range of language on relevant subjects, just as we hoped they would expose their learners to English contextualised within familiar topics.

I feel it is worth noting here the considerable importance of language development on non-native speaker teachers' courses. The study made by Reves and Medgyes (1994) revealed how a lack of language proficiency could undermine confidence and influence classroom choices, with teachers opting for the security of concrete grammar and " attaching more importance to (it) than to other, perhaps more relevant aspects." (p.362) The above authors also suggest " that frequent exposure to an authentic native language environment and proficiency in-service training activities may help improve the situation." (p.364)

Certainly, without increased confidence in their use of the language, especially with such an integrated approach, we believed that new techniques would remain little used.

Cullen (1994), Murdoch (1994) and Liu (1998) have also all highlighted the need for such language improvement on teacher development courses. Murdoch (ibid:253) goes so far as to state that a good level of language proficiency is "the most valued aspect of a non-native English teachers' competence".

Principle Two: Utilising different learning modes
As a second principle we tried to offer the teachers as many types of activities and seminar designs as we could. We did this in an attempt to mirror the different kinds of intelligences categorised by Gardner (1993), that are brought into the classroom. We wanted every teacher to maximise his or her potential on the course, whether they excelled linguistically, visually, musically, kinaesthetically or in other ways, just as they would want their young learners to excel through whichever mode they preferred.

In order to provide for these different intelligences we offered our input in many different forms. We used mini-lectures, text jig-saws, jazz chants, quizzes, group work, town walks, peer teaching and self-access. We also had sessions which showed teachers how they could set up web pages to develop and exchange classroom ideas when they went back to Austria. Finally, our most innovative input step was a session where they learnt about and produced their own dance drama. (See Emanuel 1990).

We believed that, by using this wide-ranging process of input ourselves, we would engage different individuals in different ways. We hoped, too, that the teachers would recognise this variety as something to be mirrored in their own course design.

In this way all their young learners' various strengths could be developed.

Principle Three: Participating actively
A third principle we wished to demonstrate was that of learning as an active process. We saw the teachers as experienced practitioners who came to us with many excellent ideas. We also saw them as well able to evaluate the methods we would present and the processes through which we would present them.
What we wanted was for them to relate any new techniques to their own context. We challenged them to adapt what we gave them to better fit their own classrooms. When they went back to Austria we hoped they would take more risks in their classes and by doing so would develop greater independence with this new approach to English for very young learners.
This principle of cognitive participation in the learning process reflected how they would encourage their learners to actively discover meaning. The challenge of completing appropriately graded tasks in English would promote their children's development and independence.

Principle Four: Developing the "whole" person.
All the varied facets of the course contribute to developing the teachers holistically and this, again, reflects another principle vital to the teaching of children, that is "the importance of taking account of the whole person when planning for and teaching English to young learners" Williams (1998).

An unexpected cross-cultural dimension has been added to our "whole person" teacher development. In one session we discuss differences in education and daily life between Austria and what the teachers have experienced in England. The breadth and depth of the differences they observe often surprise me. These perceptions of English life have proved an excellent starting point for a discussion about the cultural problems of Austria's many new immigrant children who are now learners in their primary classrooms.

I believe that, by articulating what they see as "different" and "strange" in England, the teachers have begun to understand more fully what it is like for "outsiders" to be immersed in a new environment.

Principle Five: Having a good time
As a last principle we wanted, above all, to provide a safe, supportive and enjoyable learning environment. Often non-native speaking teachers of English demonstrate considerable anxiety when they come on a "refresher " course with native speaker trainers, especially when this course is not voluntarily entered into. Many of the teachers we have worked with had never visited England before the course and many, especially the more mature people, have not spoken English with native speakers for years, if at all and are, thus, quite anxious at first about making contributions to sessions. Reves and Medgyes (1994) note, too, that the less language proficient teachers are, the more self-conscious, hesitant and insecure they will be.

When working with younger learners, these teachers will also need to ensure "a friendly environment which fosters a positive attitude to work and where pupils feel supported" (Driscoll, 1999)

Conclusion

As the tutor responsible for language development on the course, I tell participants at the outset that I see my role as "improving their language skills without them noticing it". I think we have all been surprised and delighted at their progress in such a short time.

I believe the mirrors are being made. The teachers gain confidence and learn to grasp meaning in relevant and interesting contexts without worrying about whether they used the right preposition or whether they knew the correct past participle. I hope they will go back and work with language for the very young in the same contextualised way.

I have been rewarded, too, by how their initial response to task-based activities has changed. They have begun not to want to be "spoon-fed" solutions immediately but have started to enjoy the challenge of predicting possibilities and negotiating meaning for themselves. I hope they will go back and, perhaps, trust their pupils too, to discover meaning and work out solutions to tasks for themselves. I have learnt, as well, that the most unexpected people can excel at dance drama and teachers who were IT novices can produce wonderful web-pages.

Finally, I have heard how much they have laughed. I hope they will take back this sense of fun and friendliness and enjoyment in another language so that their very young learners will feel positive towards English from the outset.

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Towards a classification making sense of the Internet in language teaching and teacher development

by Huw Jarvis, UK

Introduction

The significance of the Internet for EFL has been well documented. Eastment's publication (1999) was one of the first to consider not only pedagogy but also issues of electronic commerce and likely trends and implications. And it was over five years ago that the *ELT Journal* published an article by Carrier (1997 :279) which "seeks to outline the areas of Internet opportunities and features that can be used in ELT... and ... ways in which the Internet can and will revolutionise learning and teaching." With 'Internet English' by Gitsaki and Taylor (2000) we see the emergence of an EFL coursebook focusing on the type of English needed to talk about the Internet and to conduct tasks on the Internet. Essentially this publication is a World Wide Web (WWW) based conversation course centred on the language for Internet usage for pre-intermediate and intermediate learners. More coursebook publications of this type will undoubtedly follow. There is a widespread recognition amongst teachers of the need to include Internet-based activities in our classrooms and to use it for our own professional development. Educational institutions from universities and colleges to private language schools across the globe have invested heavily in the hardware for professionals to do precisely this. And yet in some institutions it is not uncommon for newly- equipped multi-media computer labs to be only partially used, left dormant or simply used as "show pieces" for visitors. A lack of technical support is sometimes a reason for this; a second reason, and one over which we, as teachers, have more control is a failure to classify different aspects of the Internet in a clear, simple and logical manner. Despite some excellent practical teacher resource publications including at least one from each major publisher: (Windeatt et. al. (2000), Teeler (2000), Sperling (1998) and Dudeney (2000)), what is yet to emerge is a framework for making sense of the Internet both in terms of the numerous productive ideas that have been generated by the resource books and in terms of its potential for our professional development as teachers. Such a classification framework might usefully illustrate how the Internet, as a technological innovation, has a variety of pedagogical and staff development applications.

continued →

Background to the proposed framework

The discussion that follows has arisen out of the author's involvement in recent years in a variety staff development and teacher training programmes and workshops in a range of contexts. In relation to the Internet, the at times otherwise very diverse groups all shared remarkably similar characteristics. Their schools, colleges and universities all had Internet-connected computers and staff were expected make use of them. All previous training provision had been technologically, not pedagogically, driven. In other words, staff had had the option to receive training, together with staff from other academic subjects, on areas such as: how to navigate the web, or how to send emails, without having discussed how these areas relate to other areas of Internet use, or how the different areas might constitute a "whole" within the specific context of language teaching and learning and/or teacher development. All groups did have access to some of the EFL paper-based literature on the subject and some were applying a limited number of suggested lessons documented in these publications. Nevertheless, the initial needs analysis for each and every training programme or workshop invariably suggested that the ELT profession has not yet fully classified Internet applications in a way which could be clearly illustrated, understood and then applied by busy practitioners. Levy (1997 :231) has commented that "teacher-related factors were the most important in determining the success of CALL." A comprehensive classification framework for Internet use in EFL is an important aspect to this equation.

A classification framework

Appendix 1 illustrates a proposed framework for making sense of the Internet in EFL and this can initially be divided into two overlapping areas (Jarvis, 2001 :130). It is these two areas which can be viewed as the "technological innovation". On the one hand there is the World Wide Web (WWW) which "is viewed primarily as a resource for information and as a medium for delivering distance and on-line learning". On the other hand, the Internet also includes email which "is viewed as a medium for sending and receiving information". The use of the WWW as a resource involves working with a browser software programme such as 'Netscape Navigator' or 'Internet Explorer' whereas examples of typical email software programmes include 'Outlook Express' or 'Pegasus Mail'. It is from the Internet as a technological innovation (the ovals in the diagram) that the pedagogical or staff development EFL applications stem (numbered squares in the diagram). However, our proposed framework requires some qualification. First, as indicated in the diagram, there are now a number of email packages offered within a web-site itself, for example www.hotmail.com or www.yahoo.com; and secondly, newer software programmes such as MSN http://home.msn.co.uk/ allow for the integration of all the Internet applications that have been identified in the diagram. It is now possible to use the WWW as a resource, and/or check your email, and/or enter a chat-room for a meeting – all from one homepage. Until recently a different WWW homepage and/or software package was needed in order to run these different Internet functions. As a final qualification it should be noted that many of the web-sites provide for more than one of the classified applications. Dave Sperling's site http://www.pacificnet.net/~sperling/ is a particularly comprehensive example covering virtually every aspect of the diagram. It is not that each web-site needs to fit into one of the proposed classification items, rather that the classification items are illustrated with EFL applications which provide a conceptual framework for understanding and using the Internet in our professional development and our teaching practice.

The World Wide Web

As indicated in the diagram in the Appendix the WWW can initially be divided into two areas.

1) Non dedicated web-sites for authentic material

Non-dedicated sites can be defined as any web-site that has not been specifically written for the language learner or teacher; these web-sites only post authentic material. In language teaching generally, the value of such authentic text (and most web-sites are still very text-based) has been well documented. Little (1989:28) observes that: "Authentic texts promote acquisition because they challenge learners to activate relevant knowledge of the world, of discourse, and of the language system, and thus construct the conditions for further learning." Although the majority of sites are still text-based this is beginning to change with some sites. Audio and video downloads, for example news clips from the BBC http://www.bbc.co.uk/, allow teachers to develop a wider range of tasks than was the case only a few years ago. The resource books referred to, practical paper-based journals (see for example Jarvis 1997) as well as on-line material (see for example the work of South, 2001) all provide suggested pedagogical tasks using a wide variety of non-dedicated web-sites. Careful planning is, of course, crucial if this resource is to be used effectively in the classroom. Atkinson (1998 :7) is just one of many to note that; "exploitation of the material is dependent upon the skills of the teacher since these materials are not produced specifically for learning activities."

2. Dedicated EFL web-sites

In contrast to the above, a dedicated EFL web-site can be defined as any site specifically dedicated to language teaching or learning; this is a broad definition covering a wide range of sites which require further classification. However, the defining characteristic of all dedicated sites is that they allow the EFL webmaster to 'author materials' and in this respect they are rather like authoring CALL programmes. A clear but simple and effective illustration of this would be the English for Academic Purposes activities found at Andy Gillett's web-site http://www.uefap.co.uk/ where interesting on-line tasks are created with an easy-to-use, on-line software authoring programme called Hot Potatoes http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/halfbaked/. Under our framework this site is classified as a dedicated site providing supplementary materials for student development – we will return to this in a sub-heading shortly.

2.1 Distance learning courses for students or teachers

These courses lead to some form of award or contribute credits to an award. They form a relatively small but ever-growing aspect of our framework. For teachers, the choice is considerable, particularly with regard to MAs in Teaching English as a Foreign Language such as the ones offered in the UK at Birmingham and Manchester Universities:

http://www.bham.ac.uk/CELS/CELS%20pages/ODL/odlteflinf.htm andhttp://www.man.ac.uk/langlit/centre/celsecourses.html. There are many other examples out there in cyberspace and those interested will need to spend time conducting searches to find the one most suited to their needs.

For students these web-sites include the delivery of EFL credit-bearing modules; for example, again in the context of the UK, the Multimedia Educational Research into Learning via an Information Network (MERLIN) project http://www.hull.ac.uk/merlin where students can study a language on-line (EFL included) as part of their main degree. Reports of initiatives of this type have been generally positive, (Marsh et. al. 1997) and Oakey (2000).

2.2 Supplementary material for teacher and student development

Whilst distance learning courses usually involve a fee and lead to a qualification, supplementary materials are usually free. For teachers, included under this heading are a number of exclusively electronic journals, some offering very practical suggestions such as *The Internet TESL Journal* http://iteslj.org/, whilst others are more theoretical such as *Language Learning and Technology* http://llt.msu.edu/. A number of paper-based journals also provide some back issues online such as *ReCall* http://www.hull.ac.uk/cti/eurocall/recall/r_online.htm or *The Teacher Trainer* http://www.tttjournal.co.uk/frs_library.htm. Not surprisingly, many of these publications, together with those posted by enthusiastic and/or respected individuals such as Paul Brett's http://pers-www.wlv.ac.uk/~le1969/ or David Eastment's http://www.eastment.com homepages, all provide features and discussions which are mainly computer-related. There are, however, other web-sites where non-technology-related teacher development issues are posted. The web-site of The International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL) hosted in the UK http://www.iatefl.org/, or its North American counterpart Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Language (TESOL) http://www.tesol.org/ are both professional bodies which discuss a range of EFL teacher development issues. From these sites, links to other regional organisations and affiliates can also be made. Dedicated EFL web-sites providing material for on-going teacher development constitute a second important aspect to classifying the Internet in EFL.

Web-sites containing material for students are far more numerous and it is to these that we now briefly turn. There are literally hundreds of these web-sites and students and teachers will need to make their own decisions. Links to such sites can be found from many of the web-sites cited in this paper. A current favourite with my students, which I include only as an illustration of the potential, is *The Virtual Language Centre* http://vlc.polyu.edu.hk/ – this site is particularly good for its comprehensive treatment of the skills and its inclusion of some audio-based minimal-pairs listening tasks under the pronunciation link. Another regularly visited site with my learners is http://www.esl-lab.com/index.htm – a website which focuses exclusively on developing listening skills. A site hosted by the British Council, also of interest because it includes material aimed at young learners, is http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/

Email

3. Writing Projects

Email writing projects formed the original applications of this technology and this area remains of central importance. It was over ten years ago that Soh and Soon (1991 :287) first described an email project which, "developed the students' grasp of technology, improved their command of English, gave them a sense of pride in their own work and enlarged their awareness of themselves as members of an international, global community." Over the last ten years approaches to developing projects have been well documented (Warschauer 1995) and their value is now established and widely accepted. Email writing clearly creates a real purpose and audience, both of which are sometimes lacking in the more conventional writing classroom.

The role of email has, however, also diversified beyond e-pen-pal contexts. It is now discussed in several terms including a means of submitting and marking student's word-processed work (see for example Holmes, 1996) and as a tool in language advising (see for example Altshul, 2001).

4. E-discussion lists

As the title suggests these are electronic forums for discussions via email. For teachers, one example included because of its general appeal, is the TESL-L list. This list as of March 3, 2001 had about 28,058 members in 159 countries. The message average is 10 per day (variable and seasonal). Most of the postings are of general interest to those in the profession of teaching English as a second or foreign language. To subscribe (free of charge) simply send an email to LISTSERV@CUNYVM.CUNY.EDU in the body of the text type SUB TESL-L Your Name. As this list has grown, a number of special-interest "branches" or sub-lists have emerged; these include: 'Fluency First' and 'Whole Language Approaches', 'Intensive English Programs', 'Teaching and Administration', 'Jobs Employment Issues, Professional Development and Working Conditions', 'Materials Writers' and 'English for Specific Purposes'. For students, an example e-discussion list can be accessed from Dave Sperling's homepage http://eslcafe.com/discussion/dh/ from which students can post any number of questions, answers and observations to virtual language learners all over the world. There are of course many other lists, which can be accessed from dedicated web-sites for students or teachers.

5. MOOs and Chat Lines

E-mail has now taken on additional dimensions by becoming interactive in real time. This aspect allows students and teachers to enter text-conferencing or "chat rooms" for an authentic experience of discussion on any number of topics in English and in real time. For activities which are more focused than the open-to-all general chat room, Multi-user domain Object Orientated (MOOs) operate like chat rooms but allow the user to keep his or her character and return to it at the next log-in. More importantly MOOs are moderated which allows the participants to have similar backgrounds. For students wanting to practise language and meet others, or for teacher development, a popular example is schMOOze University http://schmooze.hunter.cuny.edu:8888/. A discussion of the possibilities of MOOs technology can be found for example in the work Shield et. al. (2000).

continu

E-discussion lists, email writing projects, submission of word-processed work and language-advising represent one aspect of email in our classification framework, this use of the Internet is referred to as "asynchronous" because messages are not in real time. MOOs and chat lines form a second, though less widely applied, aspect of email in our classification framework; this use of the Internet is referred to as "synchronous" because messages are sent and received in real time.

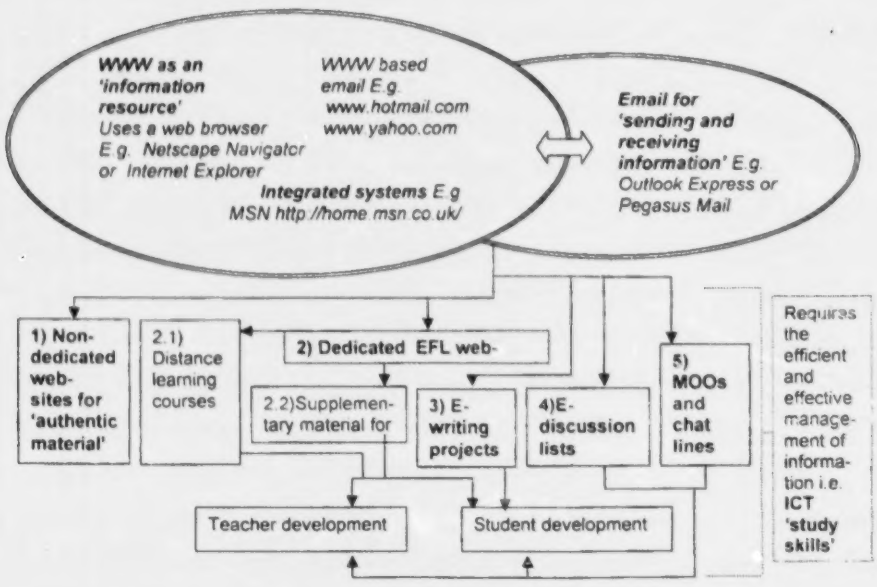
ICT Study-skills

Our proposed classification and the applications that we have discussed provide some examples of appropriate use of the Internet in EFL. However, these uses can, of course, only be realised if the users are able to navigate the Internet efficiently and effectively. Without such skills, hours of time can be wasted leading to frustration and de-motivation. ELT has a long tradition of developing paper-based study skills which includes getting pertinent information from texts and, where applicable, quoting or paraphrasing and then referencing. It also includes managing information through notes and filing systems. Similar notions are equally applicable to the e-based texts of the Internet. We need to avoid scenarios (Jarvis, 2000 :65) where "the World Wide Web is surfed by many" but "rather fewer actually 'arrive' at useful sites" and when they do "it is a 'transitory visit' with the site never being returned to because the address has not been saved." With email we need to avoid storing "hundreds of messages (all taking disk space) many of which are no longer needed". ICT study skills offer solutions by covering activities such as training in searching the web. With the web and email the element of managing the massive quantity of information is crucial, for example, by saving useful web pages and putting them into appropriately-named folders or by deleting old unwanted emails from the inbox and transferring wanted messages into appropriate folders. A more detailed discussion of these issues can be found in two publications by Jarvis (op. cit. 2000 and op. cit. 2001).

Conclusion

It has long been the contention that teachers need to view computers as a pedagogical tool. Davidson and Tomic (1994: 205) comment that "teachers who can see the computer as a pedagogical innovation and not a technological one, can use the computer creatively without having to be an expert." This article has provided a framework for understanding the Internet, from which a diverse range of pedagogical activities can be derived and/or professional development issues can be utilised. In addition to the issue of pedagogy, recent research insights suggest students in the language classroom see the Internet as more than simply a tool for learning English. Warschauer (2000 :46) comments that many students in Internet-based classes "saw themselves as learning important new life skills that integrated technology and language ... learning to read, write and communicate in the electronic medium was seen as valuable in its own right". Given this scenario, it is surely of vital importance that teachers themselves have a clear understanding of what the Internet is and what can be done with it not only in the context of the EFL classroom but beyond this in every-day life. There is some evidence (Davidson and Tomic op. cit. :207) to suggest that only teachers who make use of computers outside the classroom actually use them dynamically inside the classroom. What better way of making use of the Internet outside the classroom than by exploiting its potential to develop as professionals? My classification proposal thus provides a framework for teachers to understand the Internet in all its diversity so that they can make better use of it in their classrooms for the benefit of their students and outside the classroom for their own benefit.

A classification framework for making sense of the Internet in language teaching and teacher development


WWW as an 'information resource'
Uses a web browser E.g. Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer
WWW based email E.g. www.hotmail.com www.yahoo.com
Integrated systems E.g MSN http://home.msn.co.uk/
Email for 'sending and receiving information' E.g. Outlook Express or Pegasus Mail
1) Non-dedicated web-sites for 'authentic material'
2.1) Distance learning courses
2) Dedicated EFL web-
2.2)Supplementary material for
3) E-writing projects
4)E-discussion lists
5) MOOs and chat lines
Requires the efficient and effective management of information i.e. ICT 'study skills'
Teacher development
Student development

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Bio-data: Huw Jarvis works at the University of Salford where he is the Admissions Tutor for the MA in TEFL, a course that specifically focuses on the needs of non-native teachers working outside the UK. Huw's work involves him in teacher development initiatives China and Thailand. He worked abroad for many years (Sudan, Kuwait and Thailand) before he returned to the UK in 1993.
His areas of academic interest are computers in language learning and teaching, self-access and English for Academic Purposes. Huw has published work in several journals, including: *The British Journal of Education Technology*, *ReCALL* and *Modern English Teacher* and now *The Teacher Trainer*.

INTERVIEW

PB

An Interview with Robert Dilts

Robert Dilts is a developer, trainer and author in the field of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) which, if you are unfamiliar with this area of endeavour, is about behavioural skills and behavioural modelling. Robert Dilts is a founder of the University of NLP which is on the campus of the University of California at Santa Cruz, USA. I was lucky enough to attend a course given by Robert in London in February entitled, "Crisis, Transition and Transformation". He kindly gave me time for an interview one lunch- time during the course.

TW. What main messages would you have for our readers who are teacher trainers, mentors, and teacher educators in a range of settings world- wide but always trying to support and work with language teachers?
RD. I would love for them to be aware that they are supporting and influencing people on a number of different levels. Not just supporting the teacher's thinking and their teaching skills but sometimes their beliefs and values, their sense of self and even their sense of personal meaning .

TW. So this relates to the logical levels framework you have been showing us on this course?
RD. Yes, we could say there are six levels, the levels of environment, behaviour, thoughts (mental skills and strategies), beliefs, identity and spirituality. (See Fig 1.)

Figure 1

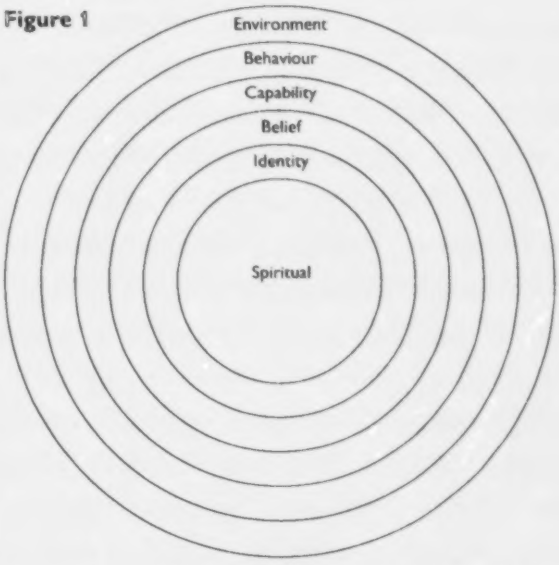

Figure from *Introducing Neuro_Linguistic Programming* by O'Connor J & J Seymour (1990)

contin

TW. If we take these one by one then, a trainer or mentor could be having an effect on the *where* and *when* of a teacher's job at the level of environment.
RD. Yes, on the external opportunities and constraints that the teacher has to react to. The level of behaviour next is about *what* the teacher does, the specific actions and reactions.

TW. The capabilities would be more about *how* the teacher does various aspects of their job whether planning or teaching or testing for example?
RD. That's right. The capabilities are the mental maps, plans and strategies guiding the teacher's actions. The beliefs or values level answers the question of *why* a teacher does what she does and how she does it. A trainer may have influence here. Beliefs provide the motivation that supports or denies the capabilities.

TW. Okay, then comes Identity which would be the sense of self, of *who* I am?
RD. Yes, the sense of who I am or of my role will determine the overall mission and shape the beliefs and values. Finally or fundamentally there is the spiritual level which relates us to a larger system beyond our family, community or global systems. The question answered here is *who else* or *what else* is there?

TW. So according to what we have been exploring on this course, a mentor or trainer will have different roles depending on which of these levels they are supporting. We will need to be flexible in our roles.
RD. Yes trainers will need to recognise that at times they will be a guide or a coach, at other times a teacher or a mentor and other times a sponsor and even an awakener.

TW. For us a "sponsor" sometimes means a financial backer but you mean something different.
RD. Yes. One of the most important roles is not just to impart information but to help people to take ownership of that information by making it part of themselves. Then there will be self- expansion and self- confidence. This involves being what I call a sponsor for someone. This is not something that just happens spontaneously between the trainer and certain trainees or the teacher and certain special students. This is something you need to develop and be more often. It involves the process of recognising and acknowledging the essence or identity of another person. Sponsorship involves seeking and safeguarding potential within others, focusing on the development of identity and core values. This involves constantly sending messages such as "I see you. You are valuable. You are welcome. You belong here." A good sponsor, in my terminology, creates a context in which others can act, grow and excel. This concept of sponsorship is founded upon Stephen Gilligan's notion of 'therapeutic sponsorship'.

TW. How can I become a sponsor or be a better sponsor of the teachers I have the privilege of working with?
RD. There is a little list of half a dozen things that, with practice, will help a person to develop the skills of sponsorship. You need to develop:
1. Personal congruence in what you are doing, attending to yourself to make sure you are ready to be there. It's about preparing you rather than your materials!
2. Connection to other people. You need to be available to others and allow yourself to be open and touched by them
3.Curiosity about your students
4 Receptiveness to them. So just as number one is about you and two is about them, so number three is about you and number four is about them
5 Ways of helping people to get around their own self-negating influences such as negative self talk and other ways they are interrupting their own learning. These tend to be identity level messages "I am no good" rather than capability level messages such "I can't do this".
6. Proper naming.
This is an interesting skill. Let's say a teacher has made a mistake in a lesson and in feedback says "Oh I am so stupid!" They have had an experience. They have a feeling about it but they are naming themselves in a way that may not be useful. Now there are certain times, "Sponsorable moments", we could call them when I can be aware and make a difference by making sure that there is proper naming. I mean that the name is the one that brings out the best in the other person as well as telling the truth about the experience. So instead of saying "I am stupid!" the teacher could say "I feel frustrated that I haven't learnt that yet!"

TW. That last one, about care with language, is especially important in our field since we are working with language teachers!
RD. When I think of language I think too of attentiveness to non- verbal language, to the meta- messages that accompany the content. It 's not just the words. It's the intonation and the body language that go with it.
If you think of a sentence such as one that might be given in feedback, "You shouldn't have done that then", the sentence expands all the logical levels depending on the stress and meta messages. The "You" is the identity, the "should" is the belief, the "doing" is the behaviour, the "that" and "now" are the environment. Now the trainer may mean this on a behavioural level but it may be taken by the trainee on an identity level. So here we need an attentiveness to the very basic NLP principle that the meaning of your communication is the response you get. You can do the best you can to make sure you language something properly but you have to be aware that your meaning is not just your intention. You have to match it up with the effect you get. So you need to be a listener and an observer of your student too

TW. Robert, thank you so much!

Further information

If you would like to browse the NLP encyclopedia (that Robert Dilts wrote with Judith DeLozier) to find out more about e.g the logical levels mentioned in this interview, go to:
www.nlpuniversitypress.com

Robert Dilt's own web site is:
www.nlpu.com

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HAVE YOU READ?

Advising and Supporting Teachers

by Mick Randall with Barbara Thornton (2001) C.U.P. ISBN 0-521-63896-8. 280+pages of paperback..

What the authors say about their book.

Here are some paraphrases taken from the first few pages of the book.

The book examines the role of the teacher-advisor and how the key skills required for producing feedback can be developed. The book is in two parts. The first part looks at the processes of giving advice. The chapter headings are:

1. When and why advisors advise
2. Learning to teach
3. The role of dialogue in learning to teach
4. Supervision and the three-stage model of helping
5. Providing a framework: Six category intervention analysis
6. Ways of talking to teachers:
   (1)Creating the right atmosphere
7. (2) Dealing with feelings
8. (3) Directing and leading
9. (4) Towards critical self-awareness
10. Putting it all together: Personal and cultural factors

The second part consists of a range of tasks for the advisor to consider plus photocopiable resources, references and index.

The philosophy of the book

The ultimate aim of providing advice is to produce a teacher or trainee capable of independence of thought and action.....The ultimate goal is to encourage the teacher to explore personal experience and to arrive at personally derived plans for action.
We believe in the power of group discussion in constructing knowledge and in reaching new understandings. (End of paraphrases.)
I find some useful and interesting paradoxes here. We work with another person but to help them become free of us. We are thinking of the individual when working in a pair but we acknowledge the power of the group for learning and the influence of the institution and the culture within which we work...Hmmmm. Some useful tensions there.

My own interest in the subject

It always makes me laugh when I hear of induction schemes for teacher trainers/advisors where the novice trainers are started on lesson observation and feedback before being allowed to do the supposedly more difficult task of giving "input " sessions! I personally consider watching a teacher at work and then discussing their work with them to be the most sensitive part of the job. I remember well the first time I observed one particular candidate on an exam course...a man older than myself and much higher up his school hierarchy than I was up mine. I tried my utmost to be tactful and careful in the feedback session in a local coffee shop (his choice of venue) but it still finished with him flouncing out, leaving me to drink up and pay up.
So, even though I think over the years I have got slightly better at the job when I found this book I jumped on it.
My pre-reading questions thus were:
"How could this book have helped me back in that coffee shop?" and "How can it help me now?"

My reading of this book

The introduction immediately clarifies the tension between guidance and assessment in the advisor's role (P10-20) It widens out the view of an advisor from the reader's own particular institution type to one of the many settings for teacher advisors including internal appraisal and staff development. It also updates us on British mentor programmes with a careful detail that is one of the hallmarks of this book.
Each of the ten chapters has a clear aim, a conclusion, further reading leads, and related tasks and photocopiable material at the back of the book. So it's easy to get into a reading, thinking, doing rhythm. The view of 'looking with' the teacher rather than 'at' the teacher (P73) is also harmoniously and consistently present throughout the book. It is mirrored by an equally accepting view of the advisor recognising that sometimes uneven work can spring from anxiety (P84).

Each of the chapters too has a particular similarity. Useful theoretical models from our own and from related fields are re- visited. The authors go back to the original sources, for example, to Kolb and Bakhtin, Vygotsky and Heron. These sources, often paraphrased rather superficially elsewhere in recent books, are reported on and quoted from carefully. I often found that my understanding of things I thought I knew pretty well was moved on. I enjoyed many less important refinements too such as the suggestion that we could, if we wanted, use the word 'andragogy' rather than 'pedagogy' for the work we do with adults (P 46).

continu

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This is a great book if you like theoretical frameworks. They are not only revisited at source and laid out in useful tables and grids individually but are also built up within each chapter and accumulate from chapter to chapter as they are gradually mapped onto one another. The similarities and differences are laid out for the reader in grids and charts. Thus we get a view, for example, of how Egan's work relates to Rogers' or Vygotsky's and how these relate in turn to the observation cycle of pre-observation meeting, observation and feedback meeting.
If the theoretical frameworks were new to you, if for example you had not heard about or read in the original Heron or Egan, the book would ask a lot of you in expecting you to become familiar quite quickly with not just each system but also the rapid comparison of one against two, three or more other systems. You might find it hard to keep them all straight. So this book certainly doesn't dumb things down.

But if you enjoy this kind of work and have time to read and re-read passages, it will lead to being a better educated person!

In some books that contain tasks, either within the text or in a special section at the end, one has the feeling that the author has been asked by the editor to include some task and that these are bolted on rather artificially to the main text. This is definitely NOT the case in the present book. There were times when after reading a particularly dense section of the book I found myself thinking, " Okay, okay, my awareness is raised! But how do I actually carry this through to my work? How can I get better at this?" Then I would take a look at the accompanying task and think "Ah yes, that's how!"

So, to go back to my original pre-reading questions. This book would have helped me when I started working closely with experienced teachers. It would have proved to me what I knew in my heart. That there is much much more to this kind of work than is first thought by a novice. I will enjoy the book now too as a slightly more experienced advisor. I am sure I will dip into it to get more detail on sources and to use the tasks to train myself and other trainers and advisors.
Thanks to the authors for all their work!

Useful Websites

www.internet-course-finder.com
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www.dlcoursefinder.com
60,000 e-learning courses offered by universities and colleges in 131 countries

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

This column is designed to keep you informed of recent publications in ELT and related fields and to save you time by giving swift descriptions of each publication so that you can decide whether it's for you or not.

Teacher education Ed. Karen Johnson (2000) TESOL ISBN 0-939791-81-1. Fourteen teacher educators document in chapter form how they think about and carry out their work. It is divided into three sections, innovations in and structured activities within TESOL teacher education and, thirdly, reflective experiences of TESOL teacher educators. The chapters contain detail on the experiences of teacher learners, their contexts and entry into a professional community, and on the experiences and learning of the authors as they prepare the teachers for work. Practical suggestions and references included.

New directions in mentoring Ed C. Mullen & D. Lick (1999) Falmer Press ISBN 0-7507-1011-X Some eighteen narrative research accounts of a new kind of mentoring involving synergistic co-mentoring, partnership support groups communities of teacher-researchers and lifelong mentoring. Based on action research in Florida USA in secondary and higher education.

Teachers' stories Ed David Thomas (1995) Open University Press ISBN 0-335-19254-8. Th e contributors argue for educational biography to be added to more formal theoretical and practical content and processes in mentoring and teacher training. By making personal stories, teacher students are introduced to critical reflection on their own educational beliefs and values. Teacher students will find support in the book for adding, through journals, logs etc their own voices to those more eminent discourses in their training institutions. It highlights the significance of the personal in initial teacher training

Leading your team by A. Leigh and M. Maynard (1996) Nicholas Brealey Pubs. ISBN 1-857888-101-X. Written for new managers wanting to know how to lead, involve and inspire their team. Starts with a basic survival kit and deals with e.g. running meetings, briefing, setting goals, reviewing progress. Sub-headings and graphics break up the text. Useful.

The excellent manager's companion by Philip Holden (1998) Gower ISBN 0-566-07947-X. A book for business people, it deals with corporate culture, employee commitment, management jargon, customer satisfaction and personal effectiveness. It contains self-assessment questions, do's and don'ts, quotations, facts, summaries, case studies, reviews of best books and bullet points galore. If managing is part of your job, this book is a no nonsense short- cut to learning more about it.

Getting the buggers to behave by Sue Cowley (2001) Continuum IBN 0-8264-4978-6. This one provides plenty of information on the basis of behaviour management, lots of tips on controlling your classes and ideas for managing the

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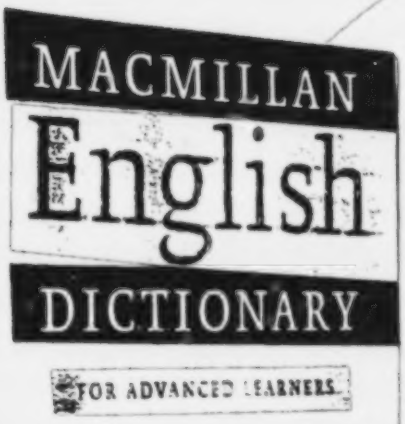

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physical aspect on the classroom. Common sense language and approach from first meetings through sanctions and rewards to getting out of the profession! Examples given of minor and major problems at primary and secondary level. Recommended.

Learner autonomy by A. Scharle and A. Szabo (2000) CUP. ISBN 0-521-77534-5. A collection of ideas for ending student over-reliance on the teacher, this book advocates a slow process by grouping ideas under text sections: raising awareness, changing attitudes and transferring roles. The ideas are designed to blend with a regular curriculum.

DIY techniques for language learners by M. Fernandez-Toro & Francis Jones (2001) CILT ISBN 1-902031-46-6. No nonsense practical advice for learners of a foreign language in the UK keen to practise the language outside the classroom. 82 techniques for developing grammar, vocabulary and the four skills explained in recipe form. All encourage learner initiative and can be self- assessed so could be useful for teachers to set as supplementary out of class work once adapted to language and age level..

The minimax teacher by Jon Taylor (2001) Etp & Delta pubs. ISBN 0-953309-89-4. This book helps teachers to reduce their input, encourage greater student involvement thus freeing themselves from stress and overwork so they can focus on key areas like monitoring and feedback. Ten key principles and 87 activities written in recipe form.

Motivational strategies in the language classroom by Zoltan Dornyer (2001) CUP ISBN 0-521793777. 35 strategies a teacher can use with language learners plus theoretical overview and a conclusion. This is a short book that the author advises should be read form the back. He also advises us to select just a few of the ideas in the book to become a "good enough" teacher rather than trying to be perfect. Pages 137-145 contain useful tables on all the strategies for quick checking.

The Cambridge guide to TESOL Eds Ro Carte and David Nunan (2001) CUP ISBN 0-521-80516-3. 30 chapters by experts on e.g. listening, vocabulary, socio-linguistics, EAP, genre, intercultural communication, teacher education. Its main aim seems to be to update the reader and map out future developments. Glossary and loooong reading list.

Using the board in the language classroom by Jeannine Dobbs (2001) CUP ISBN 0-521-654173. Oh Praise for the board! The public writing space immediately accessible to teachers and students, inexpensive, requiring no electricity, technological skill or accessories. This knowledgeable little book helps us to improve on use of the board for management, teaching, recording student input, visual stimulus, memory, language and content based activities. Illustrations throughout. Recommended.

Unauthorized methods: strategies for critical thinking Eds. J.Kincheloe and S.Steinberg (1998) Routledge. ISBN 0-415-91842-1 Twenty some contributors from different countries, subjects and levels consider how integrating popular culture and cultural studies into the lesson plan can transform the classroom into a truly multicultural and democratic space. Heady stuff.

Thinking from A to Z by Nigel Warburton. (1996) Routledge. ISBN 0-415-09686-3. An unusual, pocket- sized, reference book to help readers understand the basic tools of clear thinking. Organised alphabetically, it identifies the various moves in an argument from "ad hoc" and "analogy" through "bias" and "black and white argument" to "pedantry" and "spurious" . Clear, brief, readable and entertaining, you can read the entries and examples, follow them up in the cross references and then apply them to new cases of your own.

Contentious issues by Marianne Csoti (2002 Jessica Kingsley Pubs ISBN 1-84310-033-9. This book consists of 40 discussion stories for young people t help them challenge prejudice, stereotyping and judgemental behaviour. Primarily intended for group work by parents, schools, youth groups and teachers . Each story is short (1-2 pages max), could be simplified and is followed by a discussion sheet and leader (answer) sheet. The index of subjects goes from Abortion through Depression and Panic attacks to Video- nasties.

Professional development in higher education (HE) by Gill Nichols (2001) Kogan Page ISBN 0-7494-3207-1. In the UK, with the expansion of HE and the widening of the client group, academics are being called to account by the rest of society. A new national body the Institute for Learning and Teaching in HE is encouraging academics to be explicit about developing their professionalism in teaching and learning (as distinct from research) This book provides an overview of the debate on how quality teaching, learning and research can be achieved.

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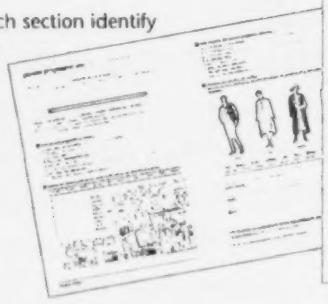

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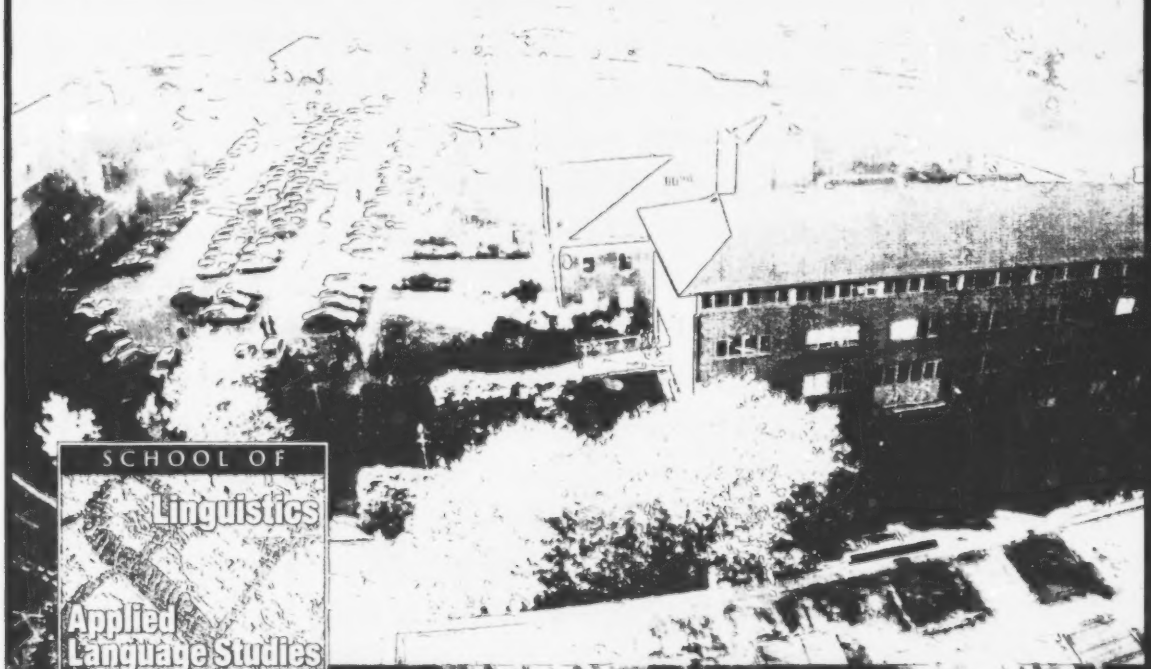

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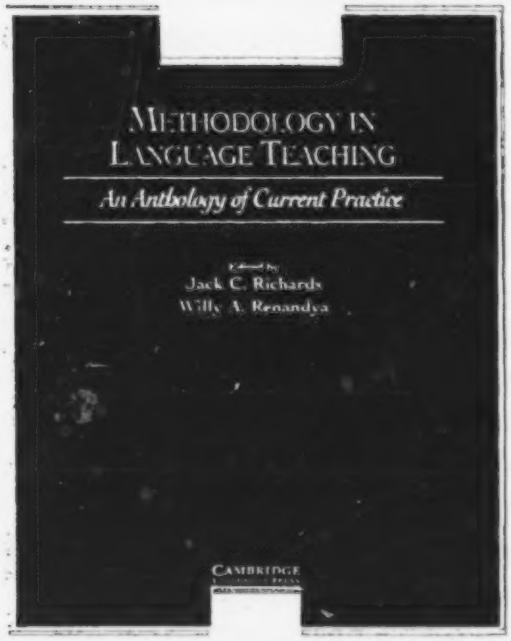

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The Teacher Trainer is a practical journal for those involved in modern language, especially TESOL, teacher training. Whether you are a teacher who tends to be asked questions by others in the staff room, or a Director of studies with an office of your own, whether you are a mentor or a course tutor on an exam course, an inspector going out to schools or a teacher educator at a university, this journal is for you. Our aim is to provide a forum for ideas, information and news, to put fellow professionals in touch with each other and to give all those involved in training, mentoring and educating teachers a feeling of how trainers in other fields operate, as well as building up a pool of experience within our own field.

The journal comes out three times a year and makes use of a variety of formats e.g. articles, letters, comments, quotations, interviews, cartoons, spoofs. If the idea is good and useful to trainers, we'll print it no matter what voice you choose to express it in.

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Editorial

Welcome to the bumper 36 page autumn issue of volume sixteen. As usual I have included well-known authors and previously unpublished ones, contributors from different countries (Latvia, Spain, UK and USA this time) and women and men. The topics in this issue range from running sessions on culture (p3) and lesson planning (p17), training models (p8) discussion of classroom dynamics (p10), work in parallel fields (p14), training materials (p20) up and coming areas like debating (p22), our publications received column (p24) and letters in reaction to Pam Aboshiha's article on primary course design in the last issue (p25).

Just as the journal comes out three times a year so our web site at www.tttjournal.co.uk is refreshed three times a year. If you visit it now, you will find it has a really nifty, internal search engine in it. This will help you to find out, for example, whether we have ever had an article on portfolios or mentoring (we have of course!) and will tell us the sorts of things you are looking for. We can then make sure we have more articles on those things in future.

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THE "AHA!" COLUMN

This is the column to write for if you have just had one of those moments when suddenly something becomes really clear to you. It's for when you suddenly say, "Aha!"! The "Aha! effect" was a term first coined, I believe, by Caleb Gattegno who used it to refer to the moment when someone is ready to learn.

A Cultural "Aha!" Moment in Teacher Education

By Natalie Hess and Jean Zukowski-Faust, USA.

Introduction

There are moments in our professional lives when scales seem to fall from our eyes. These are the "aha" moments, when suddenly we feel that something we have always intuitively known is proven by research to be right, or when something we always hoped would work actually does work. Or, the phenomenon might just create a strong theoretical reversal, as when a cherished and accepted belief that had long guided our practice suddenly collapses. Such an instant was, for example, cited in a TESOL Journal article by Steven Stryker (Vol. 6. No 7, Spring 1997, pp. 5-7). Stryker writes about how, since the first days of his teaching career he had been a highly successful practitioner of ALM. His practice had been to open beginning Spanish classes by introducing himself in the target language and by asking that students follow his example. He had assumed that such an opening was not only beneficial and appropriate, but also plain fun. However, when Stryker himself enrolled for a beginning course in German, he faced a rude awakening. On his first day, as a beginning student of German, he was exposed to the student-side of exactly the same formula he had practiced as a teacher, and found the lesson so frustrating and intimidating that he immediately abandoned his studies of German.

Here is how Stryker describes his experience:
During the first few minutes of class, I was happy to see the instructor using exactly my approach, and I thought " Great! This is going to be as much fun as it is for me in my Spanish class." Wrong! I was now on the students' end of the process. She did exactly as so many of us had been taught to do in ALM training. She spoke only in the second language and always with a reinforcing smile. She moved gracefully around the room, smiling, prompting each student to say in German "Hello, my name is _____. What is your name?"
Within minutes I was experiencing cognitive overload and affective paralysis. Producing those polysyllabic German words was a gargantuan task. As she moved ever closer-closing in on me—I felt my face flush with the mortification of anticipated failure. My mind panicked: "Oh, please let her ask all the others that question before she asks me. They'll all know I'm an idiot. . ." (p.5).

PB

The experience turned Stryker into a "Natural Approach" teacher, one who favors a fairly extended and possibly silent comprehension-without-necessary-production language acquisition phase.

As language teachers, we are well aware of the importance culture plays in language acquisition. Ovando and Collier (1985) remind us that students in ESL classrooms tend to follow the cultural norms of home regardless of school norms. Golnick and Chinn (1998) point out that language, rather than just functioning as a means of communication, socializes people into complex collective patterns. It has often been noted that it is in the meeting of language and culture that we begin to understand the complexity of human experience and the pleasure of human diversity (Scarcella, 1990; Rothenberg, 1997; Pusch, 1979; Kramsch, 1993; Hunter, 1995; Diaz-Rico and Weed, 1995).Yet, as Atkinson (1999) reminds us, not much attention has been paid in the language teaching field to the concept and notion of how culture influences our lives in the classroom or how we as teachers tend to be influenced by our own cultural norms.

Both Jean Zukowski-Faust and I, Natalie Hess, as experienced ESOL professionals, had long been aware of how cultural differences influence language learning. Nevertheless, our experience in Bolu, Turkey, during a United States Information Service (USIS) summer workshop with Turkish TEFL teachers was quite an eye-opener and very much a cultural "aha" moment.

We had been working intensively on matters of new aspects of methodology and advanced grammar for about three weeks, and felt the need for some meaningful relaxation. Following the advice of Neuman and Roskos (1990), we decided to plan a language-related game in our last session. Jean suggested that we might try a modified version of Gary Shirt's well known Ba'faa, Ba'faa game (Shirts, 1977), a game she had made up and used with cross-cultural communication classes and called "Braggle" (a combination of "brag" and "haggle"). We thought we would play the game because it would provide a lively

continued

and interesting change and because we wanted to include a cultural component in our program.

The idea of the game was to divide our group of 120 teachers into two teams—the Alphas and the Betas. The teams became two cultures, and were placed in separate rooms—each with a culture teacher/facilitator. The teams were told that they belonged to two different societies, speaking the same international language, with small dialectic variations, but following very different customs. The behavior of one group could not be predicted by the set standards of the other. (See Game directions in the appendix following this paper.)

The ostensible goal of the game, as we facilitators explained, was to figure out what rules governed the other society. Both teams were, however, warned that they would not be allowed to make direct inquiries about the social roles of the other society, as such inquiries would be considered highly inappropriate by the other culture. Each team was given a set of rules, but was not told what the rules of the other team were.

The Alphas were supposed to be gregarious and touchy-feely. They were to pat one another and their visitors on the backs; they were constantly to ask a great many personal questions and to chatter about their families, their health, and their work. Their job was to sell certain artifacts (Jean had cut out multi-colored paper shapes for this purpose). They were told how much they were to ask for each artifact, but they were also to understand that their main purpose was to sell and that they might sell at a lower price if a skilled bargainer convinced them to do so. The Betas were told that there was a serious cash flow problem in the Alpha society. As a result, an Alpha may be talked into selling at a price lower than the requisite two tokens.

Among the Alphas, "patriarchs" and "matriarchs" were appointed, and these leaders, whenever encountered, were to be bowed to and treated with utmost deference. Anyone who did not address such a leader properly, be it a native Alpha or a visitor was to be escorted to jail and not permitted to trade.

The Betas, who were to be visitors in the Alpha culture, were to be somewhat reserved, private, and conservative. They would speak only reluctantly and never to the opposite sex without an interpreter (these interpreters were issued special badges). The Betas were taught how to use hand-gestures for the words, "yes" and "no." Value in the Beta society was to be achieved through the purchase and collection of certain objects.

As they visited the Alpha society, Betas were to buy as many valuable artifacts as possible, but they were warned that only artifacts of certain shapes, colors, and markings were the "genuine article," and that everything else was a fake and should be avoided like the plague. They were taught what the fair price for the desired artifacts was and also told that anything above this price was an attempt to swindle them. They were taught not to touch one another, and to be brief and business like in all their dealings.

The Preparation Stage

We each facilitated one culture. The preparatory stage took approximately half an hour. During this time the groups were instructed in their cultural rules, and participants were given ample time to practice and internalize the rules. The practice provided laughs and enjoyment. We were definitely in the tourist stage of learning a new language and a new culture. All of us were fumbling through it together, and as we made progress, these new rules suddenly seemed very much our own. At the conclusion of our practice, the facilitator of the Beta group handed each group-member a bag of small plastic disks. These were to serve as money as the Betas moved into Alpha territory to make some purchases and to discover just what made those Alphas tick.

The Meeting of Cultures

The two "cultures" mingled for about half an hour, during which time artifacts (pieces of colored paper in various shapes and sizes) were bought and sold. Several of the Betas were sent to jail for what the Alphas thought was anti-social behavior. Many Betas were genuinely upset by the Alphas' need to keep touching the people they spoke to. They found the fawning over the Alpha patriarch and matriarch depressing, and it was quite difficult for them to make purchases as their direct behavior seemed to be

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intensely resented by "the locals." Their special vocabulary also received peculiar looks. The Alpha women who could talk to anyone seemed extremely puzzled by the behavior of the Beta women, who spoke only to other women. There was nevertheless, a great deal of interaction and many artifacts were bought and sold.

The De-Briefing Stage

As we separated for a de-briefing, the game grew extremely fascinating. Neither the Alphas nor the Betas had put much effort into discovering the rules of the other culture, but they had developed a thorough antipathy for one another and one another's modes of behavior. "They were so disgusting" was the often-voiced Beta complaint. "They kept talking about personal things and touching...I couldn't get them to stop touching." "They threw me in jail and I have no idea why."

The Alphas were equally vehement. "They were rude . . . so dry. . . so stingy. . .so cold, so unfriendly" was the way the Alphas explained it.
To the question whether they would have wanted to become part of the other culture, both groups shouted an impassioned communal, "No!" There was not a single dissenting voice.
When we met as a whole group, we discovered the real purpose of the game. What causes cultural conflict? How do cultures develop? Why are cultural rules so prevalent and so insidious? How do we decide what is normal, what is right, and what is appropriate? Where do the cultural voices come from? Why are we so defensive about our own cultural behavior? Reactions in the discussion were heated and revealing, and frequently made references to the cultural divisions of Turkey.

Conclusions

As we, Jean and Natalie, later talked over the activity, we tried to interpret what had actually happened. There seemed to be no escape from the fact that in the brief span of one hour, the participants had, in this very artificial and simulated setting, actually created ethnic animosity.

Needless to say, this was a game, and emotions were temporary. As soon as we were together as one group and started to "intellectualize" the activity through our back-stage questions, tempers cooled, and we were once again a congenial group of educators. Nevertheless, our emotions had boiled and it had happened so quickly. We, Jean and Natalie, two fairly benign and not particularly magnetic individuals, had through half an hour of "indoctrination" inoculated our groups with feelings of intense dislike for another mode of expression and behavior.

If such a process of ingrained persuasion can actually be inculcated in such a way and during such a short period of time, is it any wonder that all of us who live in cultures that from birth insidiously whisper their message in both conspicuous and subtle ways, see the world through such

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ethnocentric glasses? Our cultural knowledge, as Daniel Quinn (1995), has so aptly expressed it, is
"like a mosaic made from a million bits of information presented to us in various ways by others who share the explanation. We assemble it from the table talk of our parents, from cartoons . . . from Sunday school lessons, from text-books, teachers, news broadcasts, movies, novels, sermons, plays, and newspapers." (p. 40)

The game experience was definitely a strong one for the teachers who participated as well as for the two workshop leaders. In any culture where ethnic divisions and unspoken suspicions are common, the discussion that follows can be of great value if time for venting feelings is followed by patient analysis of these feelings.

Appendix: Rules for "Braggle"

Instructions to Facilitators

Needed to Play "Braggle" :

1. Instructions for the Game
2. Instructions for Alpha Culture
3. Instructions for Beta culture

4. Rooms: You will need two rooms, one of which must be large enough for all of the players (both Alpha and Beta groups) and the other which must be far enough away that there can be no overhearing of instructions. The larger room needs to have horizontal surfaces such as tables or desks on which the artifacts can be displayed. It is probably best to move all chairs to the side as the milling crowd will need space for the interaction.

5. Artifacts: You will need to prepare a collection of artifacts in blue, green, red, pink, yellow, white, black, brown, and orange. These artifacts can be easily made: pieces of colored paper, cut in two sizes (but different shapes). Some should be distinctly smaller than a fist, and others should be distinctly larger than a fist. On each artifact should be written single or double digit numbers (about half should have only numbers) with the other half having capital letters on them along with a sprinkling of numerals. These artifacts will be distributed randomly as to size and contents among the members of Alpha society to sell to all tourists and foreign traders.

6. A collection of tokens. Poker chips will work, or any round, coin-like token. All tokens, regardless of color, are worth the same amount. You need at least ten tokens per Beta player.

7. Translator badges: You will need two translator badges for each person who is a designated translator for the Beta culture. (Note that if your groups are small, one translator might suffice, and a group larger than 30 might require more than three translators. Also, in a unisex group, you might eliminate the translator altogether, or create another reason to translate. (For example, brown shoe wearing persons need translators to speak to black shoe wearing persons) To make the game somewhat more interesting, you might give a single translator button to one or several translator wanna-bees, who will not have the right of Beta translators but might appear to be translators to members of the Alpha culture.

Patriarch/Matriarch: You might put a hat on the patriarch/matriarch (especially if the members of the Alpha culture begin as strangers to one another) so that they will all recognize who the matriarch/patriarch is. No hat is needed if the players are already acquainted with one another.

Braggle: General Game Instructions

You are a member of one of two cultures that will meet. You are either an Alpha or a Beta. You and the members of the other culture speak and understand the words of the same international language, but your customs are probably not the same.

The behavior of the other group is not predictable from what you know of your own culture. The two cultures have never been in contact before, so although you can ostensibly communicate with one another, there may be differences in your expectations, your _____, your_____, and your_____.

It is your job to fill in the blanks by figuring out what some of these cultural differences are. However, you may not ask to see the written rules of the other culture.

IMPORTANT! It is extremely bad form in both Alpha and Beta cultures to inquire about the rules of good behavior. Any direct inquiry of such a type will result in immediate and complete banishment from the society.

In this encounter, the Betas come to visit the Alpha Society. They have a particular mission to perform.

To learn the rules of Beta culture, Betas will go to an empty room and discuss the rules of their society. There will be a ten-minute period of learning the rules. At the signal from the coordinator, the Betas will come back to the room to begin the interaction.

Note: If time allows, one could also possibly have a visit of Alphas into Beta society. They would arrive with their objects and be ready to sell.

Alpha Culture

You may not inquire about the social rules of behavior in this culture. Everything about good behavior must be observed and then imitated.

Good behavior: Acting in a socially acceptable manner for Alphas means being happy, congenial, laughing, talking, touching. A proper greeting is several warm pats on the back. When an Alpha is talking to someone, he or she keeps a hand on the other person's shoulder or elbow. Breaking contact means breaking rapport. It would be like shouting, "I hate you." Alphas believe that what a person does is more important that what a person says. Eye

contact, words, and closeness are very important parts of communication.

Alpha Culture: Alpha society is based on business. Each Alpha has a pile of artifacts. You as an Alpha are very willing to sell your artifacts, but you believe that the proper price for an artifact is two tokens. Because the people in your culture like to talk, you enjoy a good bargaining session. A good bargainer starts out with four or five tokens as the asking price, but seldom goes into much of a haggle to sell for two. If a person is really into the bargaining, he might sell at a loss to establish a good relationship with a foreigner who looks as though there is potential for establishing a good business relationship.

Customs:

You use people's first names freely in conversation with them.
You spend all your free time in chatting warmly (with hand on elbow, arm, shoulder) with fellow Alphas about relatives, their health, their jobs, or your own job, health, situation.

Economic situation:

Alpha society has a serious hard token cash flow problem. The patriarch/matriarch of your society has just asked everyone to sell artifacts for hard token cash even if it means selling at a loss. The patriarch/matriarch, however, will judge whether a foreign trader is to be trusted (or whether the foreign trader should be shunned). Saying "Braggle," the patriarch/matriarch will touch the head of any Beta he/she thinks an Alpha should discontinue trading with. From that point in time, every Alpha must avoid talking to the person that the patriarch/matriarch has judged as untrustworthy.

Preparation:

To prepare for the encounter with the Beta Culture, you must do these tasks:
Choose a patriarch or matriarch. Every Alpha will bow deeply to the patriarch/matriarch when he/she comes around, so you might want to practice a few deep bows.
Pile your artifacts neatly and wait for business.
Practice establishing contact-rapport with fellow Alphas.

Beta Culture

You may not inquire about the social rules of behavior in this culture. Everything about good behavior must be observed and then imitated.

Personal Esteem in the Community:

Your value in Beta society is judged by your ability to collect things (artifacts) of a certain size.

The size that you decide to collect is either smaller than a closed fist or larger than a closed fist. You must not mix sizes, as you are either a small artifact or a large artifact collector, never a collector of both.

The things that you collect are supposed to have a letter of the alphabet on them. If they do not have a letter of the alphabet on them, you know that they are phony. If you collect an artifact that is not genuine, you will be ridiculed by your fellow Beta culture members (who can be very cruel about it).
All artifacts must be blue, green, red, yellow, pink, or white. Black, orange, and brown artifacts are phony.
You have tokens to use as money. Tokens are very valuable.

Language:

Your culture has a special trading language: In asking to examine a blue artifact, you will use Ba or one of its allomorphs: Be, Bi, Bo, or Bu. If you want to look at a green artifact, you will use the word Ga or one of its allomorphs, Ge, Gi, Go, Gu. To see a red one, you will use Ra or one of its allomorphs: Re, Ri, Ro, Ru. The colors Yellow (Ya), Pink (Pa), Black (Bla), and White (Wa) follow the same convention.

Gestures:

In trading you use only one-word utterances and gestures, signaling "give me" with your palm upward and your fingers wriggling. To signal "yes," you extend your hand with only the little finger pointed out and move toward the person to whom you are speaking in quick repeated motions. To signal "no" you make a circle with your right forefinger and thumb, using the same repeated jerking motion toward the person you are speaking to.

Business Rules:

The correct price for the artifacts you want to buy is never less than or more than one token. You hate to be cheated and would never consider offering more than something is worth, for it would be an insult to the seller to do so.

Social Rules:

Men talk only with men. Women talk only to women. If you need to talk to a person of the opposite sex, you must have a translator. (This aspect of the game can be omitted in single sex or nearly single sex groups, or it can be varied to accommodate another division such as brown shoe wearing people talk only to brown shoe wearing people and black shoe wearing people talk only to black shoe wearing people) Translators wear two badges. Only official translators may talk with someone from the opposite sex/shoe color freely. However, they use Betan gestures just as the rest of the Culture does.

Conversation is not valued. Words are unnecessary in trading; someone who talks too much is probably not trustworthy. If a person talks too much, you will probably want to stop trying to deal with him/her because the person will probably be trying to cheat you.

You do not talk unless you must. You use only a person's first initial or consonant cluster with the sound "oo" after it when you talk to or about that person (Heidi will be

continued

"Hoo" and Greg will be "Groo"). A translator is called by the abbreviated title "Troo."

Preparation:

Choose three people in your group to be official translators.

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TRAINING AROUND THE WORLD: CHINA

A training model for in-service teachers of English
By Ding Suping, China.

Situations and problems

With the rapid development of higher education in China, many universities and colleges are increasing their enrollments of students at a fast rate. Our university is no exception. In the last two years, the number of students in the university has been doubled with 10,000 students now studying on campus. In order to meet the urgent needs of English teaching at all levels, we have recruited over 30 new teachers from college graduates since last year (they now constitute half of the total number of English teachers in the Department). With the coming of so great a number of new teachers an obvious problem arose: on the one hand, the new teachers had no teaching experience, and on the other hand, there was no possibility to send them away for further study, because of their heavy teaching load. Then how could we help these new teachers to adapt to the new environment, fulfill the new responsibilities, and deal with the new challenges and sustain the quality of the English teaching in the university? After careful consideration and investigation, we designed a teacher-training plan. This plan consists of three parts: a) pre-service training; b) in-service training; c) teaching research programme. The three components of the plan are designed to conform to the process of a teacher's professional growth. Usually a teacher would experience three psychological and professional processes before becoming a qualified teacher: a period of adaptation to the new teaching situation; problem discovery and thinking; taking action to improve teaching quality. The plan was to be implemented in the following three stages.

Stage 1: Pre-service training

The purpose of the pre-service training is to help the young beginner teachers to adapt to the new environment, welcome new experiences, make the transition from the role of student to the role of teacher, familiarize themselves with teaching conditions and some important techniques in classroom teaching. In other words, they were to be given a general introduction, description and advice about the teaching situations in the university. Some administrative leaders and experienced teachers were invited to talk on different topics. The following are some of the topics:

- The administrative structure and management system of this university of science and engineering
- The key offices and departments that teachers usually cooperate with or seek for specific help from.
- The school discipline and regulations for teachers
- Cultural resources and English teaching resources
- Teachers' responsibilities in the department and university
- Teaching sections and team co-operation

- The characteristics of the textbooks
- Teaching requirements and final assessment of teaching achievement such as the students' performance in annual Band 4 National English Examination for non-English majors. This has become a great concern of the university. And in one sense, the students' achievement in the Examination has become an important evaluation for whether or not he/she is a qualified English teacher.
- Teaching methods and techniques useful in language teaching
- Strategies for dealing with difficulties that may occur in classroom
- Strategies concerning the relationship between teachers and students
- Classroom management and ways of crediting students' achievement
- How to prepare the first lesson and give students a good impression

The information and advice from the experienced teachers and administrative officers provided the new teachers with a picture of the general teaching situation in China, and of the specifics of this university. This pre-service training was approved by the authority and appreciated by the new teachers.

Stage 2: In-service training

After a semester's teaching practice, the new teachers began to familiarize themselves with the general conditions and situations in this environment, also accumulated some teaching experience, and cultivated a consciousness of being a teacher. But, as we know, teaching situations are complicated. Many problems and questions concerning the teaching and learning occurred in the course of teaching, and they were a great challenge to them. In most cases the young teachers were not as flexible and capable as experienced teachers in handling some sophisticated and unexpected situations. They needed help and guidance either from experience or from theory. This is why I started a Teacher Training class, and moved my Teacher Training into the second stage.

I recruited an experienced foreign teacher to teach "English Teaching Methodology" in the training class. We discussed the syllabus carefully and decided on some extra-requirements besides the training content for a certificate. This included class attendance, the amount of weekly homework, final thesis of about 5,000 words, and a certificate of study with 3 different assessments of the young teachers' achievement and performance. The certificate would be useful for their later promotion. However, the main purpose of this training course was to equip our new teachers with some useful and practical theories and teaching methodology, and to examine and reflect on their own teaching performance and problems. In the training class, there were group discussions on problems, experience sharing and search for solutions. Classroom observations and self-reflection were commonly practiced. Problems coming from their classroom teaching situations stimulated their enthusiasm for theory learning, and in turn theory learning helped them to understand better the nature of problems. The new teachers were actively involved in learning in the training class, and also keen on practicing the method and techniques they freshly learned. Their learning, thinking, experimentation, reflection and study formed a positive circle of from practice to theory, and from theory to practice again. Their learning enthusiasm and motivation were unexpectedly high, and they were quite satisfied with the training.

Feedback on stage 2

One teacher who graduated from Wuhan University (a key university in China) last year told me that this course helped her understand how important it was to involve her students in participation in a learning task. Instead of monotonously lecturing in class as usual, she had now learned to organize her class into doing various interactive and communicative activities. She also applied to her class other methods and techniques she learned from the training class, and they worked perfectly. Another teacher from Hebei University majoring in literature when in university came to me excitedly one day, describing how in a given assignment she recorded her own teaching voice in the classroom and found out surprisingly that she spoke too fast, she corrected it immediately and her students smiled. She also used the theory of "reflection" to reflect on her classroom teaching performance and analyze her students' cultural and psychological needs and realized that she could use some literary stories and knowledge to enrich her class teaching instead of just focusing on the explanation of text content. Her change received a warm welcome among students. The students no longer chose the back seats, instead, crowded in front. And what is more, her students began to develop an interest in reading literature after class. For the first time since starting teaching, she enjoyed the happiness and pride of being a real English teacher.

At the end of the training course, each teacher handed in a thesis on a different topic. I edited them into a book and contributed them to the Hebei Teaching and Research annual seminar this year. The theses were widely read and highly evaluated by the teachers from other universities for its uniqueness in this province.

Stage 3: Teaching research programme

One semester of teaching experience and another semester of in-service study enriched our new teachers with practical experiences and useful theories, and developed a habit of classroom observation and self-reflection, team sharing and team-cooperation. Psychologically, the young teachers were eager to do something to improve their classroom teaching and also wanted to help their students to study more actively and efficiently. All these formed a favorable background for the third stage in my plan: "The college English teaching research programme". It was proposed to the university and approved with substantial funding for this year. This on-going programme, involving both experienced teachers and new teachers, aims at developing the language competence of non-English major college students. It falls into 4 parts: a) how to cultivate learners' basic language competence. b) How to cultivate learners' basic

continued

language skills. c) How to cultivate learners' basic learning strategies. d) What the non-intellectual factors are in the classroom affecting Chinese students' studies. Under the 4 parts are 8 smaller components around which the teachers are divided into 8 groups. In each group, the experienced teachers play an important role while the new teachers are divided according to their interest. Each group works on one topic. The implementation of the programme will be in three steps. First step: action research. and professional investigation. Second step: collectively work out teaching plans and material writing. Third step: the implementation of the findings in all foreign language classes in the university.

Supported by the substantial funding and inspired by the spirit of team work and cooperation among experienced teachers and new teachers, Chinese teachers and foreign teachers, we will attempt to solve such top priority problems as cultivating college students' English competence. The most significant thing is the development of the young teachers' professional competence and individual creativity for their future sustainable development of teaching and research.

Conclusion

This teacher training programme is designed to meet the urgent needs of English teaching situations in the university and promote the growth of brand new teachers into qualified teachers. Through the 3 stages of pre-service training, in-service training and research programme, the new teachers in our Department grow quickly. They are equipped with not only general knowledge about the English teaching situations in the university and sufficient English teaching methodologies, but also competence to do some classroom research to deal with their own problems in the process of teaching. Of course, to be an excellent teacher or what we call "a learned teacher", there is still a long way for them to go. Anyhow, the teacher training provided by the department has laid a solid foundation for the young teachers to develop toward a higher level of intellectual, experiential and attitude growth in their teaching career.

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Learning to Teach: Who Controls the Interaction in the Teacher Education Classroom?

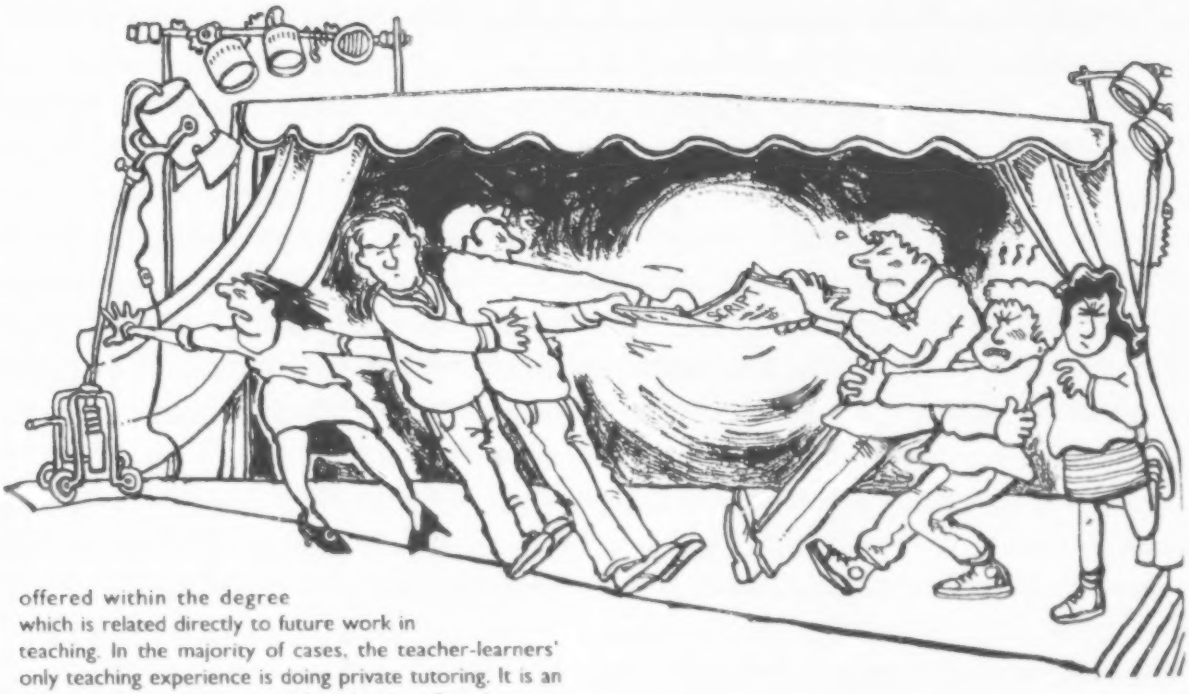
By Leslie Bobb Wolff
University of La Laguna, Spain

Introduction

Two premises that I use to guide my work in the Methodology class I teach are the following. The first is that foreign language (FL) students will be better learners to the degree that they are able to take control of their own learning process. The second is that, in language teacher education, teacher-learners need to be able to experience a sharing of the control if this is the way we want them to be able to teach in their own classrooms. These premises are both included in a pedagogy for learner autonomy (Vieira 1999:23). In the subject of Methodology, one implication of these two premises is that of organizing the decision making and interaction so that the students, who I call "teacher-learners" throughout this article, gradually take over the control of this interaction. One way I can help myself as a teacher educator to do this is by often asking myself, "Who controls the interaction?" or "How can responsibility for the interaction be shared with the teacher-learners?" As Ely & Pease-Alvarez (1996: 5) point out, "It is, after all, the teacher who is perhaps the most important catalyst in bringing about the learners' self-awareness, and it is the teacher who may be in the best position to empower students by showing them how to empower themselves." In this article I have chosen one area in which I am learning to share responsibility, that of work done with reading excerpts/articles.

Context

The work described here takes place within the subject 'Methodology for the Teaching of English' in a Spanish university. It is a one-semester subject lasting thirteen weeks, with four contact hours per week, two called 'theory' where the entire group of teacher-learners is together and two called 'practice' during which the group is divided in half. The teacher-learners are undergraduates in their sixth or eighth semester, following a relatively traditional four-year plan of studies leading to a degree in English Philology. They have mostly experienced teacher-centered, teacher-fronted classes and have seldom or never participated in any aspect of decision-making with respect to their classes. There is no teaching practicum included in the subject. It is nonetheless the only subject



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offered within the degree which is related directly to future work in teaching. In the majority of cases, the teacher-learners' only teaching experience is doing private tutoring. It is an elective, the word has spread that it's a lot of work, so we can assume that people who sign up for the subject are seriously considering becoming teachers. In the academic year 1998-1999 there were approximately 75 teacher-learners enrolled.

Traditionally in university classrooms there often is not any interaction at all unless we can define interaction as 'teacher talks - students take notes'. One typical variation of classroom interaction, which is also teacher controlled, is teacher to student one, teacher to student two etc. These are consecutive dialogues between the teacher and one student and are almost always teacher initiated and closely monitored by the teacher. As one of my Methodology teacher-learners wrote this past year referring to this traditional type of class, [It] "made me feel like a picture on the wall, observing but not participating". Another teacher-learner wrote in her journal, with respect to student passivity: "I like active classes. I usually don't participate though. This is precisely because of the fact that the education I have received all my life has made me get used to remaining passive in class".

How The Initial Reading Work Is Organised: Discussion Points

I'd like to look specifically at the work done with articles/excerpts used in the methodology class. Traditionally, when teachers assign material for students to read (whether in a methodology class or any other subject), this is usually accompanied by a series of questions the teacher sets for the students to answer while they read. In contrast, while for the first reading assignments the texts are chosen by me, I ask the teacher-learners to prepare the "questions" we will use to discuss these articles in class. Rather than 'question', I use the term 'discussion point', implying that what they write does not have to be in interrogative form and can cover more than a simple check of comprehension.

One initial difficulty is that the term 'discussion point' isn't clear to the teacher-learners so the following explanation is included with the first bibliography: "By 'discussion points' I mean 1) any statement or concept you disagree with, 2) any statement you would like to discuss with other people, 3) anything you don't understand or 4) anything that especially attracts your attention."

Another difficulty the teacher-learners encounter at first is simply the concept of them writing discussion points rather than their teacher giving them a list of questions to answer. Rivera (1999:495) describes her situation thus: "Most students came to the program expecting to be 'educated': to sit in rows, see the teacher at the front of the room writing on the blackboard, and have textbooks that would hold the knowledge they thought they needed". I have also found this to be true in my context.

The first time I present and explain the discussion points assignment, some time has to be spent on the different possibilities, listed (1-4) above. Happily, once teacher-learners begin writing and using their own discussion points, they realize how much more interesting it is to work this way. (See appendix 1 for an example of teacher-learner discussion points and sections below for their comments.)

Teacher-learners are asked to write three, four or five discussion points on each article/excerpt and hand these in to me. From these I select five to ten discussion points altogether for each article/excerpt. I choose the points most repeated by teacher-learners. I then type, photocopy and return these to the whole class. These discussion points are first commented on in small groups then in a plenary. The teacher-learners chair the

continued

discussion in small groups of 3-5. I try to avoid intervening altogether. When we come together as a whole class, I encourage the teacher-learners to lead off the discussion by asking them what particular points they would like to go into.

The Next Step: Greater Teacher-Learner Control

The use of teacher-learner written 'discussion points' is done with their first bibliography, covering teacher's and students' roles in the classroom, class dynamics and treatment of mistakes, and then with a second bibliography on grammar and assessment. After about a month and a half of class, the teacher-learners are presented with a third bibliography. This one is titled: 'Bibliography to choose from and report on'. This is a rather extensive list of excerpts/ articles. With this bibliography teacher-learners are given a greater degree of control.

Working in small groups, teacher-learners choose two texts from the bibliography or some other text they prefer. They have three possible ways of working with them, preparing and presenting either in-class, in-office or by written presentations (see below). Teacher-learners then decide if they will work individually, in pairs or in groups of three to five. Although I give brief guidelines for each type of presentation, together we decide how each type of presentation will be organized and assessed. (See appendix 2 below for an example of teacher-learner-generated assessment criteria which we all use to assess).

The teacher-learners are required to do two of the three types of presentations. Most teacher-learners choose to do an in-class presentation as one of their two. I encourage this as it gives them a chance to experience teaching a class.

In-class presentations
In-class presentations are usually done by groups of two to four. The group decides on handouts, activities, any audiovisual aids they will use, bibliography, and runs the entire class. Included in the list of articles are some with classroom application (for example work on one of the four skills, class dynamics). These are usually chosen for in-class presentations and are done as peer teaching. The teacher-learners get the entire class and me to take part in the activities they carry out during their session. The last month or month and a half of classes are mostly taken up with these in-class presentations. After each presentation, the presenters do a self-assessment of their work. Other classmates also assess the in-class presentation with the same teacher-learner generated assessment criteria as I do.

In-office presentations
In-office presentations generally take place during tutorial hours in my office and consist of an in-depth discussion based on or sparked off by one or more of the more theoretical articles chosen by the group members. I participate actively in these presentations/discussions and they often go on for two hours or more. The presenters and I do the assessment afterwards, using the criteria previously defined.

Written presentations
Written presentations are much more like a traditional university paper except that teacher-learners often do them in pairs. This requires a good deal of negotiation on their part concerning what to write. Again, assessment is carried out by the presenters and me using criteria the class has previously defined.

Process assessment
In addition, for all three types of presentations, I ask the presenters to give me a written description + assessment of the process carried out during its preparation. I find this useful for the teacher-learners as it helps them reflect on how they have worked, specifically on difficulties encountered and how these were overcome. This is also a way of helping the teacher-learners think about the different types of interaction they have had among themselves as a group while working. Since the presentations take place during the last part of the semester; teacher-learners, by then, have become accustomed to taking the lead in participation. They no longer wait for the teacher to initiate.

Why Work This Way? Discussion Points and Presentations

The two premises I included at the beginning of this article are that 1) FL students become better learners to the degree in which they can take control of their learning process and 2) that teacher-learners need to be able to experience a sharing of classroom control if we expect them to be able to teach this way in their future classrooms. In order to move away from teacher-fronted and teacher-led classes, this means we need a process of gradually increasing teacher-learner control of intervention throughout the semester in the methodology class. Starting with teacher-learner written and directed discussion points is one way of initiating this process. Going on to teacher-learner presentations takes the process one step further.

The discussion points
At the beginning of the semester, asking teacher-learners to write discussion points is a way of checking that they are doing the readings carefully and on time. Of course, at the same time it is, in fact, more difficult to write discussion points than to answer those of other people. It also changes the role these teacher-learners have in the class and the overall class dynamics.

I want to avoid the 'jug and mug' model of teacher education and would like them as teacher-learners to do the same with their future language students. Because I believe that one way of involving FL learners is to have them prepare their own materials, asking the teacher-learners to prepare their own questions is a beginning for them to experience this for themselves. I believe this is a much more powerful message than my telling them that "students participating in the preparation of their materials is important". They are experiencing the kind of learning I would like them to put in practice as teachers.

Using their discussion points as springboards is a way to get the teacher-learners to think their own thoughts about the articles rather than simply answering the questions I think are important.

Starting from the teacher-learners' discussion points rather than from mine, means that we start from what they find most interesting, most striking. We're starting from where the teacher-learners are, not where I think they should be or want them to be. They also discover the pleasure of finding themselves and their classmates working with assignments they have written themselves. Their own work is being used.

The presentations

When we move into the phase of presentations, during the last part of the semester, the teacher-learners basically run the classes. I think it is also important to give all students (teacher-learners included) an element of choice in how they will work, what topics they work on and who they will work with. Although in the first part of the semester teacher-learners are usually grouped, for small group work, using some random group formation technique, for the latter part of the semester and specifically for the presentations teacher-learners choose the classmates they work with. They choose what topic they will work on because they choose the articles they will start from, which may come from the given list or some other article they choose. They can choose how they work in the sense that they can choose the type of presentations they will carry out and organize this work as they decide to. In this way, they are able to take over their learning process to a certain degree, which we hope will help prepare them to do the same with their future FL students.

Comments From Teacher-Learners

At the end of the semester I ask the teacher-learners to prepare an end-of-course questionnaire to evaluate the Methodology class, the work we've done and my role in the classroom. One objective is to get feedback concerning the course, another is to help the teacher-learners to reflect on how we have organized the work. Working individually and then in small groups, they list possible questions to include and then each person decides individually which questions she or he wants to answer. Although this past year there was no explicit question on the use of teacher-learner written discussion points, some of the questions do relate to this. To the question, "Have you noticed that your work has been taken into account?', one teacher-learner wrote: "The first time we were handed out a photocopy with discussion points on it my friends and I were happy to see that our discussion points had been taken into account (we even signed our names next to them the first time)". Another wrote: "The use of the discussion points helped us to meditate deeper on things." A third pointed out, "Teaching is something really entertaining when you involve the students in the tasks."

In answer to a different question, concerning what had been learned during the course, a teacher-learner reflected, "I have learnt that both teachers and learners are responsible for the class. The development of the class is based on decisions made by all the members of the group and both teachers and learners can learn from each other."

And on learner autonomy in general, one teacher-learner wrote, "It seems to me that total independence is not the aim of this orientation. What is important is to direct the students towards a class where they can express themselves without reproducing in a parrot fashion what the teacher gives them to study. Autonomy has everything to do with self-confidence, with believing you have a say in education."

Conclusion

I believe that teacher-learners, the same as students in general, can gradually take over a good deal of the responsibility of controlling decision making and interaction in class. This has to be a gradual process, moving from lesser to greater student control as they learn to make decisions. If we aim for future FL teachers to share control of what happens in class with their language learners, ways must be found for them to experience this themselves in the classroom. One place for this is during their initial training in the methodology classroom.

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Appendix 1:

An example of teacher-learner discussion points on an article on Grammar (on Roldán Tapias, A. 1996. "Teaching Learner-Generated Grammar". In TESOL Spain Newsletter, Vol. XIX, Issue 2, pp. 20-21.) Quotation marks used are when the teacher-learners are quoting from the article in question. Page numbers here refer to the page in the article itself.

1 "The reaction against grammar, then, is not against grammar itself but against the way it has been taught." (p. 20) What do you think of this?

2 "Learning grammar is possible through learners' deductions instead of through a teacher's traditional presentation." I would like to discuss this with other people.

3 'Grammar translation method', 'audiolingual method' and 'drills' are unknown to me and not explained by the author.

continued

4 If the student elaborated her/his own grammar theory by doing exercises, she/he will see it as something part of her/him and not as something that comes from outside. Is this important?

5 Does working on grammar this way mean that the teacher does not have the most important role?

Appendix 2: In-class Presentations: Assessment Criteria

(From spring semester, 1998-1999)

- Activities have clear objectives
- Logical sequence of ideas and activities
- Have students participate in activities
- Members of presenting group all participate, dividing the time
- Demonstrate that you have understood and reflected on the text
- Useful presentation (adds new content, experiences, etc.) to the students
- Not boring but as interesting as possible
- Speak loud enough so that everyone can hear
- Make new concepts clear
- Take into account the time
- Speak clearly and make sure that people have understood you
- Make sure that your article fits the kind of presentation you do

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Journal Exchanges

"The Teacher Trainer" has arranged journal exchanges with

IATEFL Newsletter (UK)
English Language Teaching Journal (UK)
Modern English Teacher (UK)
RELC Journal (Singapore)
Teacher Education Quarterly (USA)
Forum (USA)
TESOL Matters (USA)
English Teaching Professional (UK)

and is abstracted by 'Language Teaching', The British Education Index, the ERIC clearing house and Contents Pages in Education.

PEOPLE WHO TRAIN PEOPLE

Vanessa Ling has been an Associate Education Advisor to the Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education Deanery for Kent, Surrey and Sussex, UK for the last two years. All the people she works with are hospital doctors and dentists who have, as part of their jobs, to train junior doctors and dentists. They have not, in the main, had any special training to help them in their work as trainers. They now, however, have the option of taking a Certificate in Teaching. There is no taught component to this certificate. No input sessions. Instead it involves a cycle of observations, written records and follow up professional conversations between the Doctor or Dentist teaching the juniors and an observer, such as Vanessa Ling, with a view to supporting further development in the understanding and practice of teaching within real life contexts.

TW Can you tell me a little about what you do, to start us off?

VL Yes. I see about 40 -50 people in their workplace doing what they normally do. So I might be with a consultant doing a ward round with juniors or in an operating theatre watching an anaesthetist or a surgeon teaching juniors a particular procedure or I might attend a lunchtime session on a particular subject at the Postgraduate Centre.

TW Do you wear a white coat?

VL No, I'm in my ordinary clothes but I wear a badge to prove I have the right to be there!

TW How will you have got to know your particular doctor or dentist?

VL. The administrator of the programme contacts me and asks if I can take on another one or two consultants. I am sent their application form. Then I write to them. In the letter I explain my background and thus why they should bother working with me! I also tell them a little about the programme...that it involves me observing them on at least three separate occasions, that they need to put aside an hour afterwards for professional conversation, and that I write a confidential record of what I have observed. I also send them a page about the particular model of Professional Development I use. (See below). They often live and work far away so I then often ask them to contact me over the phone. I ask them why they want to do the certificate and try to get them to think about what they want to

get out of it. My main aim is to get them thinking about their own objectives and also thinking about their learners. I want them to know it's about professional development and not for example about their Powerpoint presentation skills! Then we set up the first observation over the phone.

TW Do you have some sort of observation sheet when you observe?

VL Yes, it's just a sheet with the name of the candidate date etc at the top. I write notes about what I see and hear with times written down the left- hand side. I note down things I think are interesting in the way they work, for example, particular explanations or questions that they use. I write direct quotes quite often. I write about what I see too so I might write "X looks a bit glazed!" I do write some judgements here and there. I might time their wait time after questions, draw diagrams of the room and arrangement of people and furniture, interaction diagrams....lots of things that would be familiar to a language teacher trainer. At the bottom I write a summary for discussion. I try to get them to think about their students more..their weaknesses and strengths, where they are in their learning. I try to get them to think how they can link the theoretical, book learning that the juniors need for their exams and the practical hands-on stuff they need to be safe on the wards.

TW What happens next?

VL We have our professional conversation immediately after the observation. The first twenty minutes of the discussion is about the learner. I try to see if the consultant's and my perceptions of the learner are the same. I can use my lack of medical training to advantage here. I can say, "Now I don't know much about this procedure so I didn't understand this part myself but do you feel sure the junior understood it?" The second twenty minutes are based around my written record. I tear off their copy of my written record and they either read it all the way through and then discuss or read and ask questions as they go through. The third part is where we discuss issues raised by the record and finally we think about where the consultant is going next in their teaching. This is where I can occasionally give teaching tips.

TW How many passes through the observation cycle do you do?

VL It's usually three observations although I, or they, can request more. We try to get a few months between visits too to allow for reflection and shift in practice.

TW Do you get any help with your work?

VL There are eight to ten of us who do this work. We come from a wide variety of backgrounds: higher education, schools, self- employed. We meet three times a year around a set topic such as "Working in the operating theatre". We all bring in examples of what we have done in theatre, problems and solutions. It's very helpful but we all feel it's not enough.

TW How is the programme evaluated?

VL The deanery got in an outside expert to do this. One of the things that came out of this was the monitoring of our standards. So we will now have one observation of each team member per year by one of two part-time supporters. I would like to do peer observation too but unfortunately there is not enough money for that.

TW How did you get into this work?

VL Well, I answered an advert in the paper! Then we had a half- day meeting for those interested where all the issues were discussed. It was there that I realised that the values underpinning the programme were ones I could agree with.

TW What are the values?

VL The whole certificate is built on the idea of reflective practice. It is about conversations between professionals of equal but differing expertise. Suggestions about teaching techniques are secondary to discussions about trainee learning. It is actually about learning not teaching. The consultants are encouraged to stop thinking about "performing" in front of juniors and to start thinking about whether their juniors are actually learning. If they are not, what shift in the teaching might help them to learn more? The shift might include teaching techniques or may be more about attitudes, expectations and the trainees' starting point.

TW So you were really interested!

VL Yes. Then there was an extensive interview. I was accepted.

For my induction I was then attached to two experienced people and observed a consultant at work and the post- observation professional conversation with them. I then had a further conversation with them, without the consultant present, where I said what I had noticed and written down and we discussed ways of conducting the conversation and so on.

TW What do you love about this work?

VL I like the values behind the Certificate, as I said before. And the fact that the overall model is NOT an inspection model. My professional judgement is trusted. There is no box ticking. I can decide what I think is important and I am respected for that. I work with interesting people. The consultants are bright, quick to grasp things and testing at the personal level. They work long hours in very demanding environments. They delve inside people. Most of us don't! They are achievement- oriented and they like to do things well. Thus, when they start teaching and have had no training for this part

continued

of their jobs they find it very stressful. So they are very motivated. I love working with them.

TW And what do you hate?

VL The travel! I am the chair of the east Kent hospital trust so I can't do anyone in my area. SO, I have to go to Sussex and Surrey, London and Essex. It takes ages!

Other than that, I do have a slight problem with smells. Burning flesh in the operating theatre for example. But I just try to keep my focus on my job, which is watching the teaching not the operating!

TW Any problem candidates ever?

VL Well, occasionally I have people who are not willing to allow the time for the professional conversation. Of course they HAVE to agree to this otherwise they can't take part in or go on with the programme. Occasionally I have wondered about doing a fourth observation with a couple of people. I've talked this over with them. In each case for different reasons, I've decided not to insist on a fourth even though I have the right to do so. In one case I knew the consultant had good teaching skills. He was near to a break down due to other factors and this was affecting his work. Another time I realised that the candidate had moved a long way in her teaching and needed confirmation of this rather than a prolongation of the observation cycle which would have undermined her confidence. It was also doubtful if she could have taken any more on board at the time. She had moved as far as she could for a while.

Also, sometimes consultants ask me to be present when, for example, they are working with patients but not teaching. Of course, I have to refuse because I am only there to help them with their teaching skills!

TW It shows the need they have though to go on learning the relationship skills. It seems these are taught so carefully to general practitioners but evidently not enough to hospital consultants!

VL I have to be very careful not to get drawn into that!

TW Okay so what is next on the horizon?

VL We are just beginning a pilot programme working in the same way with younger people. These are the specialist registrars who are one grade down from becoming consultants. We want to see if it makes a difference getting them earlier!

TW Thanks Vanessa. The work sounds really fascinating!

VL It is!

The Teacher Trainer Journal now has a website:
www.tttjournal.co.uk
with a cool internal search engine

Models of Professional Development

There are a number of different ways of looking at professional learning; the Dreyfus model below is one of the more commonly used. A useful starting point for the teacher in a professional context is to identify what stage of development they themselves are at and where each of their learners are.

Summary of Dreyfus[1] Model of Skills Acquisition[2]

Level 1 Novice
- Rigid adherence to taught rules or plans
- Little situational perception
- No discretionary judgement

Level 2 Advanced Beginner
- Guidelines for action based on attributes or aspects (aspects are global characteristics of situations recognisable only after some prior experience)
- Situational perception still limited
- All attributes and aspects are treated separately and given equal importance

Level 3 Competent
- Coping with crowdedness
- Now sees actions at least partially in terms of longer-term goals
- Conscious deliberate planning
- Standardised and routinised procedures

Level 4 Proficient
- Sees situations holistically rather than in terms of aspects
- Sees what is most important in a situation
- Perceives deviations from the normal pattern
- Decision-making less laboured
- Uses maxims for guidance, whose meaning varies according to the situation

Level 5 Expert
- No longer relies on rules, guidelines or maxims
- Intuitive grasp of situations based on deep tacit understanding
- Analytic approaches used only in novel situation or when problems occur
- Vision of what is possible

[1] Dreyfus HL and Dreyfus SE (1986) *Mind over Machine: The Power of Human Intuition and Expertise in the Era of the Computer*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell

[2] taken from: Eraut, M (1994) *Developing Professional Knowledge and Competence*, London, Falmer Press, (p 124)

A Lesson in Lesson Planning

By Martha Lengelin, Mexico and Emily Thrush, USA.

Introduction

Many teacher-trainers who run interactive, participative training sessions, find the class slows to a crawl as they laboriously lecture on the importance, the purpose, and the elements of a lesson plan. Also, it can be difficult to convey to trainee teachers the complexity of lesson planning and the function of plans as a device that defines the roles of the teacher and students, builds on a cohesive approach to language teaching and learning and constructs a specific culture for the classroom. It takes time—and hands-on activities can be very helpful in building the skills necessary for lesson planning as well as conveying the concepts and conventions behind what often seems to be just busy work. For these reasons, we have worked on developing a set of activities to introduce trainees to the intricacies of lesson planning. We will discuss here three activities that we have used to make lesson planning more enjoyable for both trainer and trainee and to model the kind of interactive teaching practices we espouse.

Activity One: Jigsaw Lesson Plan

1. Take a good lesson plan (use the sample in Appendix A or create one of your own) and cut it into chunks. If the steps in the lesson plan are numbered, remove the numbers, but leave any headings such as Level of Class, Introduction, etc. The criteria for determining a "good" lesson plan are laid out in some detail in the checklist in Appendix C, but essentially, a good lesson plan is one that has sufficient information for a reader to evaluate the appropriateness of the activities for a particular group of language students and for another teacher to carry out effectively. It is a guide or a map that structures the class and facilitates continuity from one class period to the next.

2. Divide trainees into groups. Give each group one chunk of the lesson plan. Tell them that they are to read their part of the lesson plan and become "experts" on it. They should discuss their chunk in their group to make sure they understand the goals and objectives, logistics and other aspects of their part of the plan.

3. Number trainees off in their groups. (Jigsawing works best if you start with, for example, 5 groups of 4, or 4 groups of 6, etc. Groups of more than 5 or 6 will be a problem.) Ask trainees to re-sort themselves into new groups by numbers. (All number 1s in one group, number 2s in another group, etc.) The new groups will contain one member from each of the "expert" groups.

4. Tell the new groups that they are to reconstruct the entire lesson plan from the chunks discussed in their previous groups. They will need to tell each other about the "chunk" of the lesson plan that they studied in their "expert" groups, decide what the sequence of those chunks should be, and put them in order.

5. Once the sample lesson plan has been reconstructed, the groups should develop a template for lesson planning, by identifying the elements in the sample plan, the purposes for each element, and the degree of specificity needed (time limits for activities, for example, or indications of the skill area or degree of difficulty of the activity.)

6. At this point, the trainees can consider the variety of audiences for lesson plans, and consider what elements are needed if the lesson plan is intended for a supervisor, other teachers, or only as a guideline for the person who writes it and is going to teach it.

7. If time permits, the trainer might ask the groups to present their templates to the class. Allow just 5 minutes for each group to present the most important parts of their templates. Or the trainer might take up the templates and make copies for the groups so that they can compare their templates.

Activity Two: Analyzing a Lesson Plan

An effective technique in teaching trainees how to edit their writing is to bring in samples of writing with problems and guide them in identifying the flaws. The strategies they develop can then be applied to their own work, but it is often easier for them to critique from an outside perspective first. We have applied this technique to teaching lesson planning as well. Sometimes, we pretend that the "bad" sample is a real lesson plan of our own. The trainees usually catch on that the sample is intentionally bad, but it can make the activity more fun if they have a chance to critique the teacher-trainer instead of the other way around!

1. Bring in a sample of a "bad" lesson plan (see the example in Appendix B). The sample should include those types of errors that trainees often make: poorly developed activities, omissions such as lack of identification of the students' skill level, lack of sufficient detail for an outside reader to understand the activity, as well as activities that do not work toward the goals of the class and the program, such as a lack of opportunity for meaningful communication .

2. Ask trainees to fill out the Checklist (Appendix C) individually at first, then share their ideas in groups of 2 or 3. Allow 10 minutes for the individual activity; 15 minutes for the group discussion.

continued

3. Go through the checklist with the class, calling on groups to share their conclusions about a particular item. Allow approximately 15-20 minutes for discussion. Be sure to allow enough time to discuss the problems with the content of the sample lesson (for example, the lesson in Appendix B allows for no meaningful communication among students) as well as problems with format.

This activity also provides an opportunity for the trainees to work with and understand the items on the checklist before they apply it to their own plans.

Activity Three: Group Planning

Having trainees plan a lesson in groups is another way to provide them with both interactive experience and with a level of support that is often needed in the initial stages. It also distances the individual from the final product to make critiquing less devastating.

1. Have trainees work in groups of 3-4.

2. Distribute a page or two from a textbook or assign a structure or feature of the language that the trainees might be teaching. Alternatively, ask them to write what they think your lesson plan was for this lesson on lesson planning!

3. Ask the groups to develop a lesson plan for one class period based on the page you have distributed. Ask them to include a description of the intended language student group.

4. Exchange the completed plans among the groups and have them use the Checklist in Appendix C to critique the plan. Ask them to take notes on their critiques to return to the group that authored the plan.

5. If time allows, have the groups present the plans or part of a plan they authored, including any responses to the critique (changes they made in the plan as a result of the peer review.) If the group of trainees is very comfortable with each other, you could ask the groups to present the plan they critiqued instead, with their comments, or you might have them write anonymous feedback on the lesson plans.

Debriefing

Any time you model an effective classroom technique with your trainees, it's a good idea to debrief them after the activity. Ask them to recall what they did in the activity, writing the steps on a board or OHP. Talk about the language skills they needed to do the activity, and how the same activity structure (jigsawing, critiquing, or peer reviewing) could be used in a language classroom. Be sure to point out processes they may not have been aware of when they were immersed in the activity, such as how you set time limits, your role in facilitating the groups, or how you gave feedback to individuals and groups. Ask them to identify the objectives for this training session. You might have them write down the objectives and discuss them in groups.

Now your trainees are ready to try their hand at developing their own language lesson plans, armed with in-depth knowledge of the processes and pitfalls of designing classes to meet specific goals and objectives. Time to send them out to play that tournament and be winners at this game of lesson planning!

Appendix A: Sample "Good" Lesson Plan

Teacher: M. Martha Lengeling
Class: Level 100
Place: Language School, U. of Guanajuato
Date: 28/2/00, 9-10 a. m.
Students: 35 students (20 women and 15 men); average age of 20; from different university degree programs, including international trade, chemistry, civil engineering and industrial relations.
Skill Level: Beginning class, although many Ss have had some English previously.
Time Frame: 35 hours of class already completed.
Textbook: *Interchange I*, Chapter 6.
Recent work: present simple tense (affirmative, negative, and questions), frequency adverbs (*sometimes, often, never,* etc.) in the present simple, themes of family and occupations.
Goal: Students will be able to talk about their everyday activities.
Objectives: Students will be able to:
1. Form questions in the present simple about everyday activities and answer using an adverb of frequency such as *always, usually, never,* etc.
2. Use adverbials phrases of times (once a week, twice a month, every day), practice the questions *How often. . . ?* and answer with an adverbial phrase.
3. Ask the questions *How often. . . ?* and answer with an adverbial phrase or a frequency adverb.

Activity 1
Time allotted: 10-12 minutes
Context: Ss' own lives
Purpose: Review and Fluency building.
Activity/ class organization: Walk and Talk. Ss are each given one question about habitual activities. Ss interview each other, exchanging papers with the questions after answering each others' questions. They then find different Ss and ask the new question. Some of the questions are: How often do you play tennis?
How often do you go to the movies?
How often do you do your homework?
For feedback, T asks questions to individual Ss.
Materials: pieces of papers with questions
Language: present simple questions and frequency adverbs
Possible problems: Ss may just be coming from another class and not arrive in time to practice. Because this is a review activity, Ss will not miss valuable new information.

Activity 2
Time allotted: 15-18 minutes
Context: sports and doing exercises
Activity/class organization: Ss look at the picture of the man who is out of shape and finishing a marathon on page 38 of their textbooks. T asks Ss what they think he

is doing and to describe the man. T asks Ss how often they do exercise. Ss look at the grammar box while listening to the cassette. T draws attention to the adverbs of frequency. T then asks a couple of questions about how often Ss practice different sports and elicits adverbial phrases. Ss answer questions in exercise one, page 38 using the adverbs of frequency. T circulates to help. Then Ss work in groups of two to ask and answer the questions using an adverbial phrase.
Materials: book, cassette for *Interchange 1*, and tape player
Language: adverbial phrases (*every day, once a week, twice a week*, etc.)
Possible Problems: Ss may not know some of the phrases such as *once* or *twice*. T may need to explain these phrases.

Activity 3
Time allotted: 20 minutes
Context: Ss' personal lives
Activity/class organization: "How often do you..." Board Game. Ss will work in groups of three or four depending on number of students. Ss take turns rolling the dice and moving a marker on the board. The player to the right asks the question written on the space on the board. The first player answers the question with an adverb of frequency or an adverbial phrase. If the group agrees that the answer is well formed, the player leaves the marker on the new space. Otherwise, the marker is returned to the previous space. If a S lands on a space marked "free question", then other players may ask any question that they like. Play continues as time allows. The T asks which group got the farthest and congratulates this team. T gives Ss feedback and asks a few of the questions to some of the Ss to finish the activity. T gives homework for the following day : *Interchange 1* workbook for Unit 5 exercise 3,4, and 7.
Materials: set of dice for each group, coins for markers, copies of board game
Language: present simple questions with *how often*, frequency adverbs and adverbial phrases
Possible problems: Ss may not understand how to play game and may need clarification on procedure. Ss may need explanation of vocabulary from other Ss or T.

Appendix B: "Bad" Lesson Plan for Critiquing

Class: 400
Date: Feb. 7, 2000
Place: Language School
Description of class: This class is big. They meet regularly.
Recent work: We have done the first unit in the book and also the workbook.
Stage 1: Grammar explanations of the three grammar points that will be covered in the second unit of the book.
Objective: To familiarize Ss with all the grammar that they will need to know in this unit. To translate all the unknown vocabulary that is found in the examples of the grammar points.
Materials: The examples from the book, Spanish/English dicionario.
Timing: Approximately 15-20 minutes.
Procedure: T explains in Spanish all the grammar points of this unit in order that the Ss have a clear idea of what they will be doing before we do any practice exercises. T uses the dictionary to look up any words the Ss do not understand and tells the Ss what the translation is in Spanish and English. Ss are asked if they understand what the T has explained.
Problems anticipated and solutions: Ss may not arrive on time and the T will have to explain any grammar points the late arrivals have missed.

Stage 2: Grammar Exercise
Objective: To reinforce all the grammar points that the T has just explained but in a writing activity which is to fill in the blanks.
Language focus: All of the grammar points in Unit Two.
Timing: Approximately 15 minutes.
Procedure:
T has Ss open their books and do three fill-in-the-blank exercises. The T reads the instructions aloud and then the Ss work individually.

Stage 3: Listening
Objective: Ss will practice listening.
Language focus: any
Time: 15 minutes
Procedure:
Ss open their books to the page of the listening text and read along while the T reads the two page listening text. After listening to the text, Ss answer the 15 comprehension questions and write all the words that they do not know on a piece of paper. They give the words and answers to the T when they are through. Ss may leave as soon as they have finished this activity.

Appendix C: Checklist for Lesson Plans

This Checklist can be used for trainees to evaluate their own lesson plans as well as the examples in Appendices A and B.

	Yes/No
1. Mark the activities in your lesson plan according to which of the 4 skills each activity is primarily intended to develop (**L**istening, **S**peaking, **R**eading or **W**riting). Is the range of activities appropriate to the class you are teaching?	
2. Mark the activities as **W**hole class, **G**roup, **P**air, **I**ndividual or **T**eacher (explanations, reading aloud, etc.). Do the Ss work in a variety of arrangements throughout the class? If not, is there a good reason for not using a variety of groupings for this particular lesson?	
3. Mark each activity as **F**ast-moving or **R**eflective. Does the plan contain changes of pace? If not, will Ss become bored with the slow pace or too excited to process the language?	

continued

	Yes/No
4. Mark each activity for the intelligence that Ss will draw on or develop (musical, artistic, linguistic, spatial, mathematical, etc.) If one day's lesson draws primarily on one of the intelligences, what intelligences could be addressed in subsequent lessons?	
5. Look for transitions between activities. Will the Ss see an overall structure to the day's lesson or does it seem like an unconnected collection of activities?	
6. Do the activities include a range of level of difficulty?	
7. Do the activities range in mood—including some light-hearted and some more serious?	
8. Mark the activities as Interactive or Passive. Are Ss going to be actively involved through much of the class?	
9. Does the plan include a warm-up: something to introduce the day's topic to the Ss and get them involved in the class?	
10. Does the plan take into consideration the age group of the Ss? (Adults may need a lively activity to get them excited about the class, while too much excitement can over- stimulate children and make it harder for them to absorb new information.)	
11. Does the lesson end with something that pulls the day's activities together or provides a general conclusion?	
12. Does the plan contain enough information for the intended reader (supervisor, another teacher) to understand the activities and carry them out if necessary?	

Checklist adapted from Penny Ur, *A Course in Language Teaching*, Cambridge UP, 1997, and from Mary Ann Christison, "Advanced Workshop in Multiple Intelligence Theory", *MEXTESOL Conference*, Aguascalientes, November, 2000.

Emily Thrush was a Fulbright Scholar at the University of Guanajuato in Mexico from 2000-2001. She is a professor at the University of Memphis, USA. Martha Lengeling is a teacher trainer in the State of Guanajuato in Mexico and works at the University of Guanajuato. Currently Martha is a doctoral student at Canterbury Christ Church University College, UK.

Using Coursebooks To Train Teachers

By Jeremy Harmer, UK.

Introduction

Everybody knows that coursebooks are used in large numbers by teachers of English all over the world. But everybody knows too, that this use is controversial (see, for example, Allwright 1981, Tice 1991, Thornbury 2000 , Harmer 2001a). Whatever people feel about the use of such cultural artefacts, however, there is one situation in which they are absolutely invaluable, and that is in the training of teachers. The issues that swirl around coursebook design, discussions of how or if to choose them, and guidelines for their use (or non-use) go to the heart of what it is to teach English and as such inform just about every area of our joint experience.

As a coursebook writer and user myself, I have, of course, a generally positive (but not entirely uncritical) attitude to coursebooks, believing them, on balance, to do far more good than harm. However, I also believe that if teachers are confident and skilfull enough to facilitate coherent, engaging and interesting classes without them, that is fine too. Indeed a decision to exist in a coursebook-free environment may be, for certain trainees, the result of some of the activities that this short article will offer and discuss. I might not agree with such a decision, but provided it is taken in a principled and thoughtful way it would be difficult to argue with it especially, of course, if it achieves satisfactory results.

Whatever our trainees may think about coursebooks before, during or after their courses, I suggest that there are three coursebook elements that should be major features in their training.

Element 1: How would you write a coursebook?

Even people who have not yet taught anybody will have some ideas about what should go into a coursebook, however general such ideas might be. After all they have their own past learning experience to fall back on if nothing else. The trainer can help to focus these ideas by, first of all, helping trainees to tease out the issues that any coursebook writer has to confront. A short discussion will soon yield a list of things that a materials designer would have to make decisions about. Such a list will include the kind of activities that the coursebook users should be involved in, the topic and content in the coursebook, the laanguage that should be included, the progression of such language and topics, the type of approach/syllabus that should be followed, and the layout and design of the materials.

However this list is arrived at, it is the next stage that yields the greatest benefit. Here trainees are asked to take one or more of the areas and write belief statements, starting with 'I believe...'. They can do this, of course, after discussing their beliefs with colleagues and they can then produce joint or individual statements. The trainer may well want to suggest areas like 'language drills', 'grammar', 'gender' or 'pairwork' to provoke thought, but after that it is up to the trainees themselves.

When belief statements have been written the group shares them around and discusses the implications of each one, challenging the statement writers to justify their decisions. Such a discussion then leads on to the completion (in groups) of the following chart:

If I was writing a coursebook I would definitely include .....

If I was writing a coursebook I would definitely not include .....

This procedure almost always brings out central issues in teaching. In the area of topic and content, for example, trainees tend to discuss issues of acceptability, age and interests, culture and balance (in terms of gender, ethnicity etc). When talking about activities, there is always a 'teaching vs learning' phase in some form or other where different methodological perspectives covering the range from transmission teaching to autonomous learning are discussed; there is generally a debate about whether controlled practice is worth it, or an estimation of the value of pairwork and groupwork. In the same way syllabus types and syllabus design issues emerge naturally from such a process.

Element 2: How would you choose a coursebook?

Belief features in the next element of coursebook discussion too. Here trainees can be asked 'how would you/do you choose coursebooks?' and rather simply referring to someone else's checklist - however useful such checklists might be - they are encouraged to become involved in a three-stage process that teases out many issues in materials design.

Stage 1: We start by asking them to list what areas they need to consider. Through discussion (and with some prompting) we might end up with a list which looks something like this:

Price	Language study activities
Availability	Language use activities
Layout & design	Topics
Instructions	Cultural acceptability
Methodology	Usability
Skills	Teacher's guide
Syllabus	

Stage 2: Trainees are once again asked to write belief statements about these areas individually or in groups, but this time modalised with should. If one group has chosen the Teacher's Guide, for example, they might come up with statements such as

The TG should offer suggestions for using the material in a variety of different ways.
The TG should give all answers (with possible alternatives)
The TG should offer clear procedural notes..... etc

Stage 3: These belief statements are then collated into a group/class checklist. e.g.

Area	Assessment statements	Coursebook 1	Coursebook 2
The Teacher's Guide	The TG should offer suggestions for using the material in different ways		
	The TG should give all answers (with possible alternatives)		
	The TG should offer clear procedural notes		

Trainees can use checklists like this to look at one or more coursebooks to see how well (if at all) they match up; judgements are being based on their own opinions and feelings, not on some outside agency's view.

Element 3: How would you use a coursebook?

There are many accounts of how teachers can make decisions about textbook use (e.g. Grant 1987, Acklam 1994, Harmer 2001b). What they all boil down to is that teachers first have to decide whether or not to use a coursebook or coursebook section. If they decide that they do want to use that section they then have to decide whether or not they wish to change it in any way. If they do, they can follow a number of options, including adding something to the section or reducing it, re-writing the section in some way, replacing some of the activities in the section, or re-ordering the activities in the section.
Trainees need to be presented with these options too (and often are), and should then be asked to look at a section in a coursebook to say exactly how they would treat it. If this 'using a coursebook' element comes after one or other of the preceding coursebook elements on the course, I feel that the discussion will be both richer and more sophisticated than it might otherwise have been.

One way of bringing coursebook use into sharp focus is to show trainees a section and ask them what they would do with it for (a) a large group of teenagers, (b) a small monolingual group of adults in a private language school, (c) a small multi-lingual group of adults in a private language school, (d) in a one-to-one situation etc. This almost forces our trainees to think about adapting the material either in terms of content or procedure - a crucial skill for a great number of teachers around the world.

Further training: coursebooks as agents of change

It is, finally, worth pointing out that coursebooks have a teacher development (and training) function beyond the continued

confines of teacher training courses. In the first place, where the guides which accompany coursebooks have been thoughtfully written, they provide a wealth of methodological insight and support. But perhaps more than this, the introduction of any new material into the curriculum is a powerful developmental event for all concerned. Many teachers will recognise the de-stabilising (but ultimately creative) effect of a change of coursebook: the staffroom is suddenly alive (again) with discussions about how to do certain exercises or why a text does or doesn't work, or what one teacher has managed to do with the listening text in unit 13. As such coursebooks act as powerful agents of methodological change (Hutchinson & Torres 1994).

Final thoughts

Whether trainers and methodologists like coursebooks or not, helping trainees to use them appropriately will be of immense use for teachers in many parts of the world working in many different education systems. That is why it forms such an important part of many training courses. However, what this sort article has tried to suggest is that there are other ways of investigating and talking about coursebooks too, and that these elements yield valuable insights not just into coursebooks themselves, but also into many of the fundamental questions about how, why and what we teach.

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i A similar 3-stage training procedure is discussed in Tomlinson & Masuhara 2000 , and in Tomlinson 2001.

ii his is something that Ingrid Freebairn first suggested to me.

Trainer and materials writer Jeremy Harmer is the general editor of the Longman methodology series and hosts the ELT Forum teacher development website at www.eltforum.com

TRAINER BACKGROUND

AN INTERVIEW ON DEBATING: a way of working on ALL the skills!

I was lucky enough to meet Alina Gutauskiene after a presentation she gave on debating at a trainers' conference in Latvia last year. As I had noticed several contributions on debates and debating in conferences held during the year, I decided I needed to find out more about this increasingly popular way of working with English classes.

TW Alina, can you tell me a little about yourself and your involvement with debating?

AG Yes! I'm Alina Gutauskiene, an English teacher, working at the Jesuit gymnasium in Kaunas, Lithuania. In 1994 I attended workshops in debating conducted by debate experts from the Open Society Institute in New York Since then I have coached teams in my own school (as an extra - curricular activity). My students have participated in World Debate Championships in Wales (1995), in Israel (1998), in London (1999) in the USA (2000) and as a judge in Singapore in 2001. I also coach University students. In 1998 I was an adjudicator at The World Debate Championship for University students in Greece. With my colleague- coaches, Alma Juozaitiene and Virginija Paksiene, I wrote a debate program for secondary school students and teachers. It was approved by the Ministry of Education of Lithuania and now debate can be taught as an optional subject in secondary schools. Since 1994 we (debate fans) have been conducting debate seminars for teachers all over Lithuania. In 1999 I was invited as a trainer to coach at an international camp in Croatia.

TW Is debating a big thing in Lithuania now?

AG Yes, quite. In Lithuania we have three national debate tournaments each year, one for novice debaters and two for experienced ones. We also participate in Regional European tournaments in summer.

TW Why do you think it's so popular in your country now?

AG I think debate is very important to students in post communist countries because both teachers (coaches) and students have to learn how to live in a democracy. Debates open a new perspective to many issues: social, political, cultural, economic and even moral. They help you to realise that though there is absolute truth, no one person alone can claim to posses it. Debates teach you to think critically, to question assumptions, to do research, analyse facts, develop logical arguments and draw conclusions. They also teach you how to work in a team, how to be well organised and how to listen

attentively. For us, non English speakers, they are a means to learn English and participate in World events.

TW How can I get started?

AG Debate is a new sphere of activity in Lithuania, that's why a beginning for us was rather difficult. It took some time for the kids and the colleagues to realise the advantages of debate. My advice on how to start is: take your students to watch a debate on some interesting topic and if there is a floor debate afterwards, encourage them to engage in the discussion. If there are no public debates going on near you, use a controversial radio or TV programme and BE the debate afterwards! After that it will be easier to involve students in debate.
Select a smaller group at the beginning, teach them some theory and start preparing for a debate on some relatively easy but interesting topic. When the students are managing fairly well, organise a public debate, it can be a show debate, i.e. prepared in advance, because you need to succeed. Show this debate to other kids at school. A whole bunch of kids for your debating society is then guaranteed.

TW You say, "Teach them some theory" What sort of thing do you mean?

AG First of all, they need to know that you have to choose a topic. It is called a resolution or motion in debates. It has to be interesting, timely in nature and it must give both sides (the affirmative and the negative) equal opportunities to develop their own arguments. For example, "The European Union can guarantee equal rights for all its citizens" .There are many discussions going on in Lithuania at the moment about whether we should join the EU or not. That's why I can say that this topic is rather significant to our people.

TW Okay what's next?

AG The second step involves the affirmative team defining the most important words or phrases in the resolution. In the topic above we'll have to define the EU and "rights". It is necessary to explain what rights we have in mind, eg, human rights in general, or maybe civil and political rights. The definition is intended to limit the debate to a specific area. If we define rights as human rights in general, we create for ourselves a huge debating task. Because of the time limit we'll not be able to prove that EU can protect all rights of its citizens. The topic will be too broad. If the affirmative team relinquishes its right to define the terms, the other team will do it for them, and in a manner that is to its advantage. Not every word within the resolution requires a dictionary definition in order to be understood. The words "citizens" and "equal" are clear enough in this resolution. Another question would be about the arguments.

TW Okay Shoot!

AG The first step is brainstorming. When you get the resolution, which may sound very complicated and weird, don't panic. Get together and start brainstorming, ie generating ideas. You'll find you know quite a lot. One idea will lead you to another idea. The more ideas the better. The next step is to do research. Sometimes the coach will give you some articles on the resolution, but this is not enough. Go to the library, talk to specialists, experts, browse through the internet, look through the newspapers, talk to people. Then get into a group again and discuss the problem in more detail, letting each member report what they have found out.

TW Right so we have got the topic, defined the main terms, brainstormed, done research and shared the findings. What happens next?

AG Discussion! The role of the coach at this stage is to allow students to talk, to foster their thinking. Then students write their own arguments. For this they have to know the rules of how to write a good argument. The main points are:

1. The claim is stated.
2. The claim is explained.
3. The claim is supported. (Evidence and reasoning provide support.)
4. A conclusion for the original claim is made.

It is very important to follow this structure.
The affirmative team has to remember that it has to prove the resolution, while the negative teams must oppose it by refuting the arguments of the opponents. Clash is the key issue in debate.

TW You spoke about evidence?

AG Yes There are different types of evidence: testimony, facts and statistics, surveys and examples. Evidence is usually written on evidence cards.
There is one more important thing to remember, each speaker has his/her role.

TW It all sounds rather complicated and sounds like it would take a long time! Is it worth it?

AG Absolutely. Now that we debate regularly, my students can discuss a variety of topics, eg, the European Union and its policy, NATO expansion, capital punishment, euthanasia, abortion etc. It means that they are well read and, besides, they do it all in English. Last week for example we debated on the resolution that Censorship of Individual Expression is Beneficial to Society. In order to prepare well for this topic they had to read an essay by John Stuart Mill, "On Liberty". They had to know the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and what it says about individual expression. They had to read about the first amendment of the US Constitution and even read a book by an American author, Marjorie Heins called "Not in Front of the Children". We searched the internet and came across that book. We wrote an e-mail to the author, Ms. Heins, and she actually sent us the book! So, you see, we don't waste our precious time.

TW I can see that! It sounds really exciting! I'll have a go and come back to you for more pointers later. Thanks Alina!

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED

This column is designed to keep you informed of recent publications in ELT and related fields. Our aim is to save you time by giving swift descriptions of each publication. You can then decide whether it's for you or not.

Becoming a teacher Eds Justin Dillon & Meg Maguire (2001) Open University Press. ISBN 0-335-20861-4. Written for UK student and starter teachers of all subjects at primary and secondary level, this collection of articles is designed to provide accessible, readable, accurate accounts of research findings, how experienced teachers think and feel and historical background on a wide range of issues including teacher qualities, curriculum, values, inspections, parents, citizenship, school and teacher quality. Small print but some nice short articles useful to trainees and teachers.

Thinking about teaching Ed Tony Cotton (1998) Hodder & Stoughton ISBN 0-340-70513-2. Eight educators started meeting in April 1997 and over the following months, through discussion of memories and anecdotes, collaborated on writing up their thoughts, anxieties and confidences on the issues of teaching competence, best teachers, careers advice, expectations and motivation, watching others teach, and best lessons. Slim book. Recommended.

Teaching English worldwide by Paul Lindsay (2000) Alta Book Center Pubs. ISBN 1-882483-77-4. Designed for those who are thinking about teaching English but have had no training, are planning to take an initial course or have just started work in an English language school. Based around a series of questions such as "What is the role of the teacher?" "What are the basic language skills?" each of 21 chapters has sub headings, bullet points and a couple of further reading leads.

Teaching modern foreign languages by Carol Morgan and Peter Neil (2001) Kogan Page ISBN 0-7494-3347-7. Written from a UK context and closely related to the delivery of the MFL national curriculum in a time of fading interest in MFL as subjects, the book aims to guide trainees through Circular 04/98. Includes current research findings as related to classroom practice and insights from the rest of Europe. There is much here that would be familiar to an ESOL teacher including sections on teaching FLs at primary level, CLIL, and ICT.

Teaching languages to young learners by Lynne Cameron (2001) CUP ISBN 0-521-77434-9. Not a course book or recipe book, this winner of the recent Ben Warren prize offers a theoretical framework to structure thinking about children's language learning and gives practical suggestions on how to analyse and evaluate classroom activities, language use and development.

Mentoring in the new millenium Ed Napoca Star (2001) British Council ISBN 973-8169-50-X A selection of papers from the second British council regional mentor conference April 2000 Romania. This conference brought together 220 participants from 14 different countries. The collection includes papers from plenaries, workshops and discussion groups and is divided into preparation, implementation, evaluation and non-elt. A lively read.

Planning and designing training programmes by Leslie Rae (1997) Gower ISBN 0-566-07929-1 (Hb) Written from an industrial, commercial background this book describes a logical pattern of identifying and analysing needs, planning and designing programmes and sessions and evaluating them. Lots of bullet points, diagrams and flow charts.

Structure in fives: designing effective organisations. by Henry Mintzberg (1983) Prentice Hall ISBN 0-13-854191-4. Managers, staff specialists and consultants will find here a synthesis of messages from research on what it takes to design an effective organisation. The central theme is that the design seems to involve the consideration of only a few basic configurations. Division of tasks, co-ordination among divisions, visual representation of organisations, decentralisation, structure and situation are all seen to take five basic forms.

Pen and paper games for training by Lucy Seifert (2001) Gower ISBN 0-566-08299-3. An A4 hardback with 40 games needing only pen and paper, flip chart and pens, handouts and an occasional prize. They are described in recipe format and used for relaxing, engaging, bonding, teaching and assessing trainees. Some photocopiable visuals and worked examples.

Basic concepts of intercultural communication Ed Milton Bennett (1998) Intercultural press ISBN 1-877864-62-5. A collection of twelve classic and more contemporary articles designed as a text for courses in cross-cultural understanding, multiculturalism etc Chapters on the global village, multicultural education, black and white cultural styles transition shock . A useful introduction and a chapter by Whorf on science and linguistics.

Developing intercultural awareness: a cross-cultural training handbook by L.R. Kohls & J.M. Knight (1981) Intercultural Press ISBN 1-877864-13-7. The book demonstrates how to lead a workshop designed to develop awareness in a culturally naïve audience. Contains culture general and culture specific (USA) ice- breakers, simulations, case studies.

Access and inclusion for children with autistic spectrum disorders by M. Hesmonhalgh & C. Breakey (2001) Jessica Kingsley pubs ISBN 1-85302-986-6 The authors set up and run an integrated programme for children with ASD within a mainstream secondary school.

They use a combination of stories, school documents teaching ideas and accounts for the special pupils, peers and teachers to explain how they have managed the remarkable feat of integrating the ASD children in the regular school curriculum with extra life skills classes, work placement and further education links.

Teaching critical literacy Eds Anne Burns and Susan Hood (1998) NCELTR ISBN 1-86408-307-7. In the Teachers' Voices series from Macquarie University. Critical literacy, which is more than just a functional ability to read and write, is concerned with having an understanding of the politics and ideology behind texts. This A4 booklet highlights the action research of a group of six adult migrant teachers investigating approaches to teaching crit. lit. to second language learners. Good first chapters on action research and crit lit followed by six chapters containing neat descriptions of the action research projects, what was learned from them, suggestions for the future, discussion and classroom tasks. Interesting.

The dynamics of the language classroom by Ian Tudor (2001) CUP ISBN 0-521-776767 Leaving behind the linear input-output model, this book explores the dynamic and unpredictable ecological nature of the language classroom. Includes chapters on visions of language, learning, the classroom, methodology and context, local dynamics and negotiation. Ends with seven guidelines for teachers wishing to explore their own situations and to approach decision-making in a locally meaningful and sustainable manner.

The whole world guide to language learning by Terry Marshall (1989) Intercultural Press ISBN 0-933662-75-0 If you or your students are going abroad for a long time and plan to learn the language of the host community, you might like to consider this book. It advocates an 'in situ' approach to language learning that involves use of a mentor (native speaker in the host community) and a "daily learning cycle" of planning, practicing, communication face-to-face and evaluating. The method is explained and six lesson plans get you started.

Impro learning by Paul Jackson (1998) Gower Pubs ISBN 0-566-07928-3 (Hb) Written for corporate trainers and designed to draw form the world of drama by using spontaneity and fun, this book offers the tools, models, principles and attitudes of improvisation to invite, greet, meet, bond, energise, elicit from and leave a group of participants.

Active learning in seminars: Humanities by Peter Davies available from SEDA, ISBN 1-902435-15-X A pack of 12 resource cards in a plastic wallet for use in higher education for professional development of tutors. The cards deal with six seminar genres (including games, group work, role play), three types of difficult territory for tutors (abstract ideas, numerical data, and primary sources) and video sessions, interactive lectures and self and peer assessment. Each card acts as a kind of summary of the issue giving an introduction, quotes, practical ideas, examples and evaluation.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Tessa,

I really enjoyed the thinking in Pam Aboshiha's article "Making mirrors in primary course design"(Vol. 16 No.2) but felt my heart freezing as I read her conclusions. While the article describes what seems to have been a beautifully designed and well-taught, intensive programme, the conclusions speak of the participants as a mass, as a plurality, as a totality.
Here are some quotes from the conclusion that focus on significant pronoun and personal adjectival use:

.. delighted at ***their*** *progress....*
*...****their*** *initial response to task-based learning has changed....*
*...****they*** *have begun not to want to be spoon-fed...*

Yes, it is totally normal to come out of two weeks group work and think about "them" but it is

a) unrealistic
b) unaware
c) negates the huge amount of personal, one-to-one-in-the-group contact the tutor has had with the participants.

I simply do not believe that **all** the participants will have made progress that delighted Pam equally. She might even be delighted by some one who made very little progress over the two weeks but whom she thinks may surge ahead once back home.

I do not believe that the whole group changed their initial response to task-based learning in the same ways, nor that they all shared a homogeneous initial response to this way of proceeding.

I am not sure that they all felt that knowledge offered by the tutor was "spoon-feeding" . I am not sure that they have all moved away from the wish to learn traditionally, nor that they have all moved the same distance.

No, this is not quibbling over Pam's grammatical choices or her style

It is a major question about **Trainer Mindset.** In my own case, I regard it as a professional obligation, at the end of a course, to say with clarity, that I do not know what the course has been about, for the participants.

Individuals have reported to me, over the years, that a teacher training course has been experienced as:

- The successful mourning of the death of a parent
- A discovery of huge talents that the participant had not focussed on before
- Two weeks of theatre in the target language that the participant knew had nothing to do with his real classroom
- Finding a new life partner and deciding to exit an unsuccessful marriage
- Deciding that all this games-playing has nothing to do with serious academic life

continued

- Confusion, bewilderment and extreme language fatigue.
- The filling of a huge bag with excellent new technical ideas to try out the minute the participant got home.
- A congerie of stuff that needs to be mentally processed on return home.
- An extraordinary conversion to new ways of feeling and thinking: a new set of beliefs
- The same dank depression at the start as at the finish

I hope these different experiences explain why I shudder when colleagues end a course and come out talking about **THEIR, THEY, THEM.**

Warmly yours,

Mario Rinvolucri

(Editor of Humanising Language Teaching at www.hltmag.co.uk.)

Reply

Reply from Pam Aboshiha, Lecturer at Christ Church College, Canterbury

Dear Tessa,

I am very much in agreement with many of the things Mario says and I welcome his raising the issue of my using "them", "their" and "they" to generalise about the course participants. I am well aware that for each individual teacher the courses may have had a different meaning and conclusion. However, if I laboriously wrote "some of the teachers" "many of the teachers", "a few of the teachers" or "the teachers mainly" or "one or two teachers", I think the article would become wordy and unreadable.

I think, too, that Mario's use of the term "Trainer Mindset", rather undervalues trainers' understanding of courses and course participants. Although he doesn't say "their" mindset, the sub-text is that Mario is putting all trainers in the same box of unawareness. **It's as if he is saying, "They keep saying "They"!** OF COURSE many/ most/ a lot of/ thoughtful, aware trainers know that teachers who come on refresher courses often "suspend belief" and as well view the product and the process of the course in a myriad of ways. However, my comments were based on feedback given in over 200 course evaluations. The feedback was that the teachers were pretty much ALL delighted with their progress. (I would add, too, that our experience of Austrian teachers is that if they had not been happy, they would have told us clearly and honestly.)

I believe, therefore, that in this case, for reasons of style, readability and plain fact it was appropriate to make some kind of generalisation rather than ask each participant to write their individual story or to try to write it for them.

Pam

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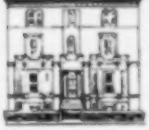

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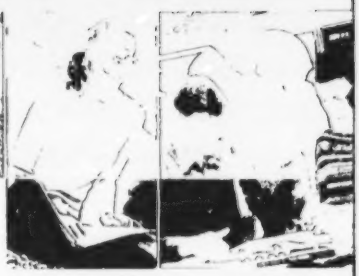

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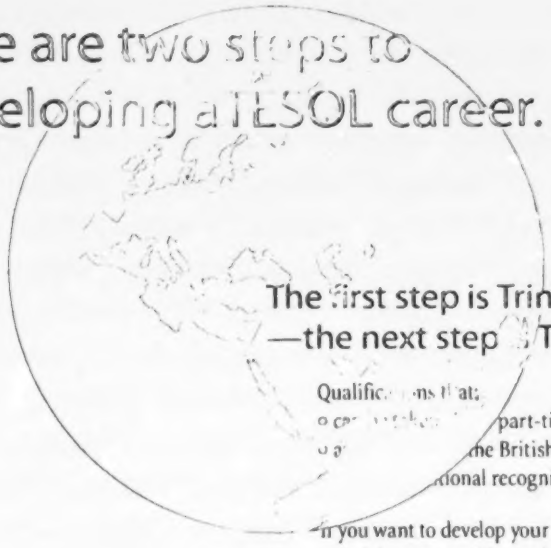

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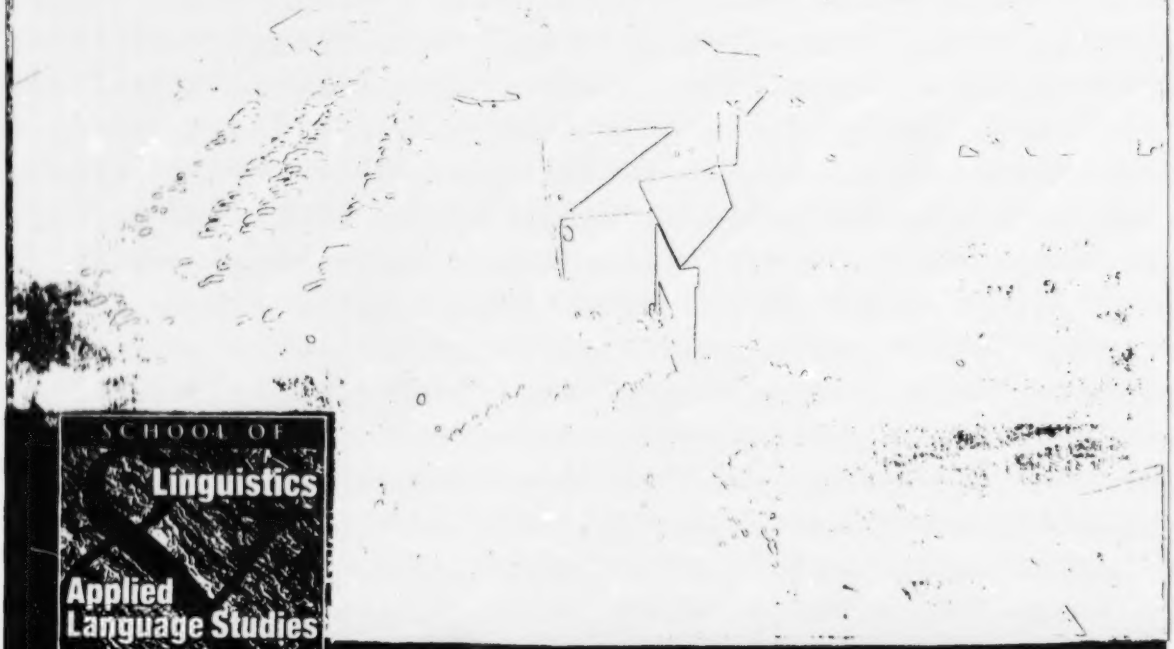

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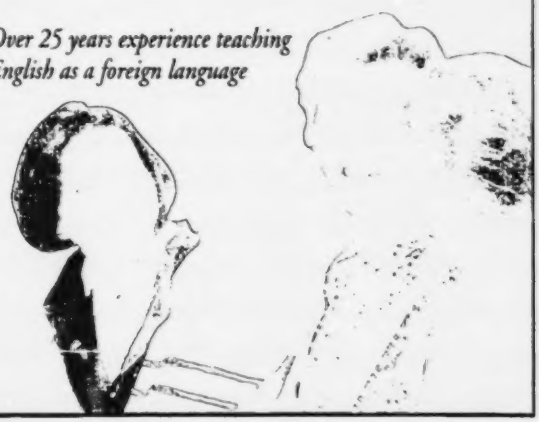

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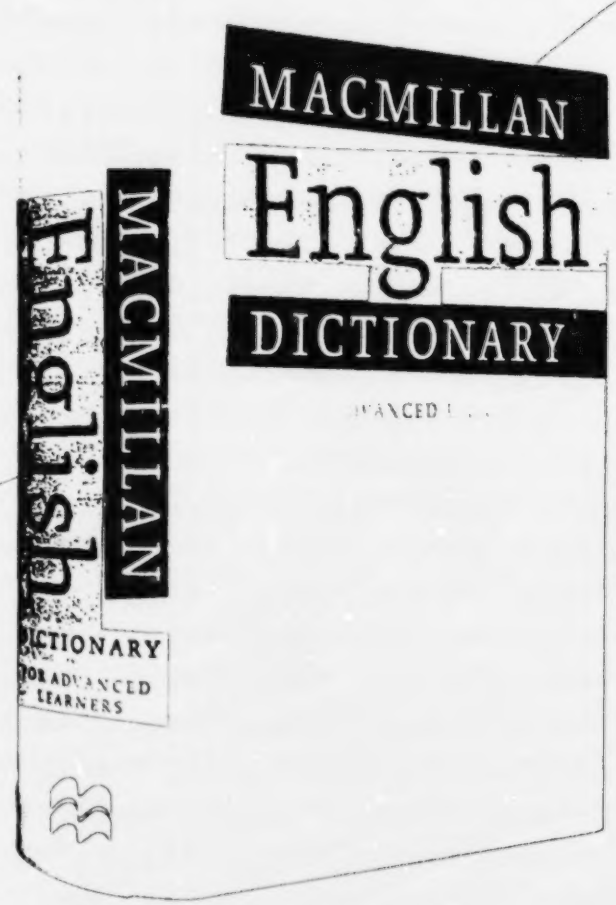

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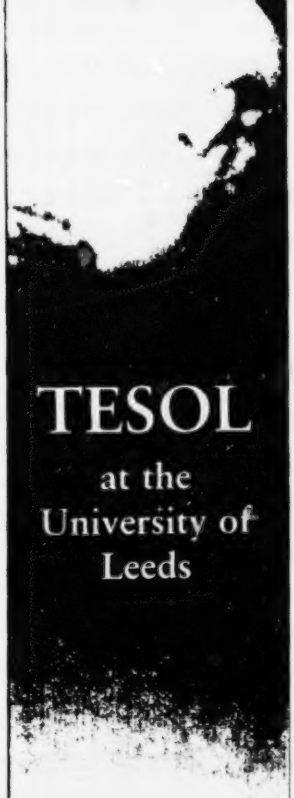

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